

# THE TRAIL OF THE CIRCUIT RIDER



WILLIAM LARKIN DUREN











THE TRAIL OF THE  
CIRCUIT RIDER

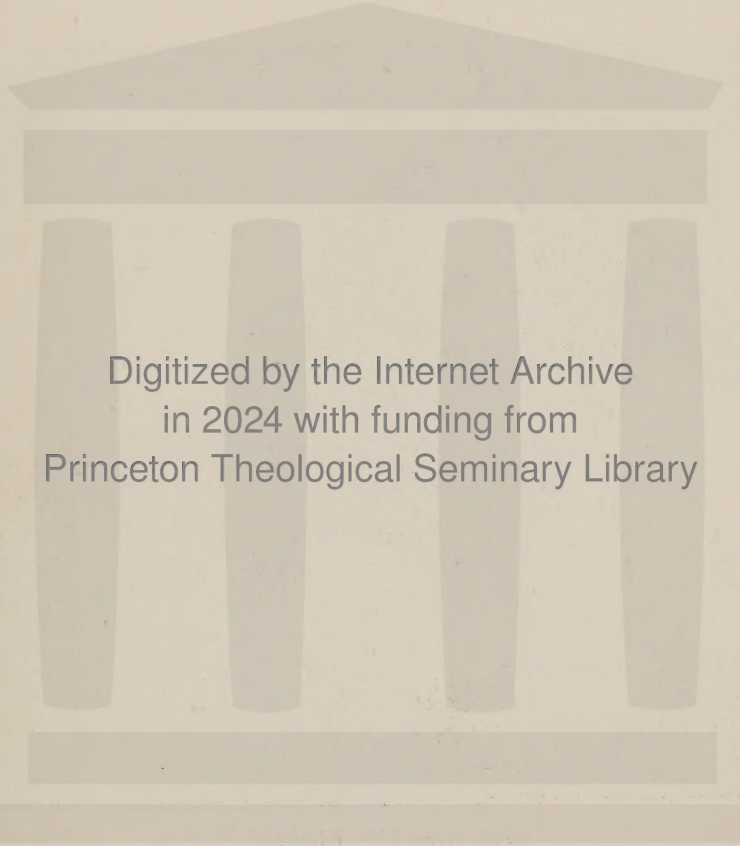
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THE TOP SERGEANT, LIFE OF JESSE LEE

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THE CIRCUIT RIDER





# The Trail of the Circuit Rider

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WILLIAM LARKIN DUREN

Editor New Orleans Christian Advocate  
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TO

BISHOP HOYT McWHORTER DOBBS,

whose devotion to the work of his Church truly  
exhibits the Circuit-Rider spirit and whose  
Christian culture and brotherly bearing reflect  
the labors of the men whose humble service  
made a radiant trail across the world, this  
volume is respectfully dedicated.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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## FOREWORD

THE writing of history, whether from the standpoint of recording events or the interpretation of a movement, requires infinite patience, discriminating insight and a balanced judgment, along with the other qualities which enter into the making of good literature. The writer of this volume does not lay claim to any such eminence of qualification; but he is urged to the undertaking rather by the feeling that there is great and growing need for a new interpretation of Methodist progress, particularly that part which has to do with the great controversies through which it has passed. The Methodist Church in America, with its various dismemberments, can not be understood without a reasonably accurate knowledge of the facts to which its whole history is a logical reaction. And it does not need to be said that history with a controversial aim or ambition is necessarily an impediment to ecclesiastical good will.

No great movement is ever susceptible of such complete isolation as to make its treatment simple and direct, and such is certainly true of the history of Methodism. It has bearing upon every phase and problem of our civilization, and its story must be dissected out of records of action and achievement to which it is often only incidentally related. The modifications of social and political circumstance must be considered, and even the disposition to exploit the church for economic advantage can not be ignored. James Truslow Adams intimates that, in the march of democracy, the missionary often finds access to the people through an alliance with the Chamber of Com-



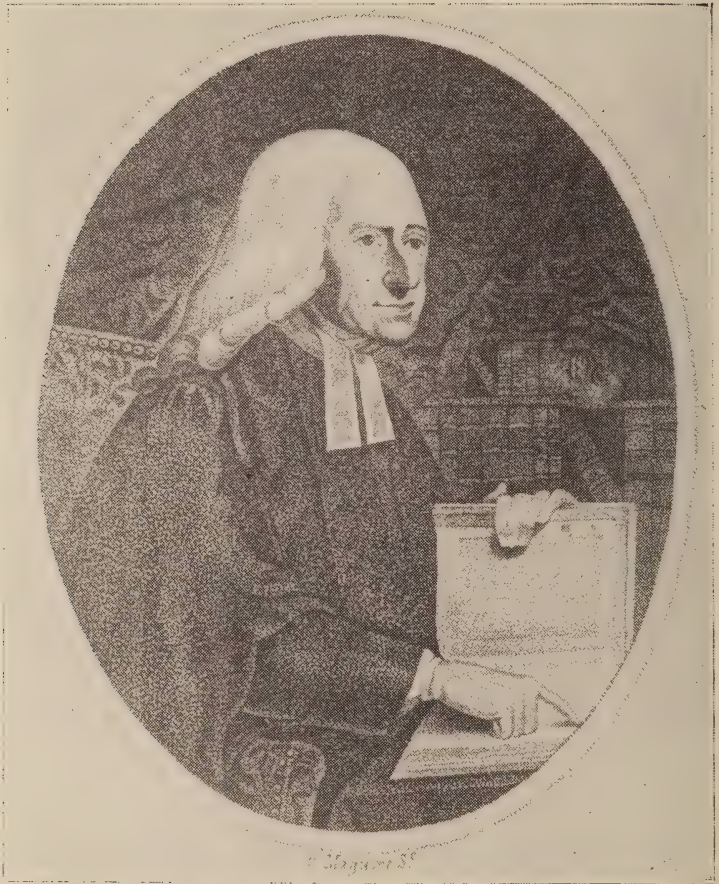
merce; and he quotes Timothy Flint, a western missionary, as saying: "A minister—a church—a school—are words to flourish in an advertisement to sell lots."

The choice of a title for a study of Methodism is simple enough; but difficulty arises when one undertakes to keep within its limitations. Its history has commandeered the genius of scores of interpreters, and its militant evangelism has drawn the fire of a vast army of critics. Its records and its literature, therefore, have become too varied and voluminous to be compressed into the space of a single volume. The Methodist historian faces constantly the embarrassment of deciding as to what shall be elaborated and what must be indicated by a bare outline of facts; for, even though the story of the rise and progress of the Church is a unit, there are vast areas of interesting and informing incident which can be given only passing notice.

In the short space of two hundred years, Methodism has won for itself a place of honor and distinction among the Christian forces of the entire world; and the name of its illustrious Founder is known and honored to the ends of the earth. Through its literature and its legion of adherents, it has become a mighty social and religious influence. It began as a militant form of evangelism, and neither time nor clime has changed its emphasis or halted its march. The church which began in Aldersgate Street, May 24, 1738, with the world for its parish, retains its devotion to its original ideal; and the single heart "strangely warmed" has multiplied until the hosts of ecumenical Methodism are numbered by the millions, and its property holdings have reached staggering totals.

Nothing could be more natural than that the life and progress of this multitude of Christians should command the attention of church historians, and should





REV. JOHN WESLEY, M. A.

Founder of World-wide Methodism. Born June 28, 1703. Died  
March 2, 1791,



furnish an inspiring theme for many a consecrated pen. Numerous biographies of John Wesley have been written and many histories of Methodism have found their way from the press; but withal each succeeding generation finds the story a virgin soil and the record a priceless treasure-field of social and spiritual exploration. Through patient research, Methodist archives are constantly yielding new and illuminating source material, and the present day historian speaks with a tone of authority and confidence not possible to those who wrote more than a generation ago. A number of excellent studies with a new approach to the subject have been produced in recent months. *Wesley and the Eighteenth Century*, by Maldwyn Edwards, is an able development of a hitherto neglected field. Many other valuable and discriminating books have been issued, but no generation or group of writers can exhaust the literature of Methodism. The pages of the record shine with an inextinguishable luster, and the contacts and ramifications of Wesleyan thought are so intertwined with the movements of the world as to give promise of yet long-continued and glorious service.

In some features of its origin and development Methodism stands alone. It does not represent a theological revolt and, for that reason, it has been saved from the scourge of intellectual dogmatics and argumentation; and it has been able to furnish a spiritual and an inspirational leadership for the religious forces of the world. Its beliefs have been definite and positive; but it has not made appeal through a creed of hair-splitting discriminations in the field of theological opinion; and it has consequently escaped a measure of intolerance and exclusiveness from which other communions have not always been free. This fact has helped to perpetuate the ideals of Mr. Wesley, and the impulses which gave momentum to the progress of the church.

Theological opinion and ecclesiastical affiliation were not made tests for admission into the societies; and it is likely that every phase of belief and of church connection was represented in the movement. In America unbaptized and unaffiliated persons were admitted to class, and there were preachers who did not receive baptism until after they had been assigned to a circuit. This heterogeneous composition gave the Methodist movement an independence which probably contributed something to its ecclesiastical course; for it is not likely that an association of Church of England, Moravian, German Reformed, Lutheran, Quaker, and Mennonite folk would be strongly attached to any recognized and established form of church government.

The controversies which have arisen in the Methodist Church have not been due to theological differences, but have revolved around great moral and ethical questions; they have reflected the soul of the church rather than its polemical genius. This fact is so apparent in our history that it has been said: "Methodism has produced artists, thinkers, and scholars, but has rarely kept them." Its supreme hospitality is for men and women who know God and who have a passion for making him known to others. The history of the movement set on foot by the Wesleys is pre-eminently a romance of evangelistic effort and spiritual fervor. If the Methodist Church has not shone in the realm of great scholarship, it has shed a radiance upon the pathway of millions in all lands that will cause it to shine beyond the stars forever.

It is one of the misfortunes of church history that much of it is defensive rather than interpretative—it is consciously or unconsciously the advocate of a contested position. Probably no interpretation can be altogether free from that fault; but the influence of contests and temporary situations should not be exaggerated in a manner to give them an importance

greater than their due. The passion and partisan feeling of the O'Kelly schism; the contest which ultimated in the organization of the Methodist Protestant Church; and the slavery agitation which rent episcopal Methodism in twain have played unfortunate and even disastrous parts in the history of the church, and they are indelibly stamped upon its progress. Some of our best collations of fact are, therefore, spoiled by a tense-ness of feeling which could not be suppressed.

The greater number of Methodist histories have been written from the standpoint of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and no serious effort to write the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, as such, has been made since 1884. This statement is not meant to reflect upon any work that has been produced, North or South; but is preliminary to saying that it is the purpose of this volume to trace the development of Methodism with particular reference to the South. To that end, we shall follow the course of the church from its beginning through the years of our common history; and from the severance in 1844, we will follow mainly the course of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The history of other Methodist groups will be treated incidentally, but not with the detail of co-ordinate development. Authorities will be cited for important statements; original sources when obtainable, and in all cases references which we find least reason to question.

The literature interpreting the slavery controversy, both before and after 1844, is not very reassuring. We give full credit for the sincerity of those who wrote, but their words disclose the violent antipathies of those warring days, and their arguments do not appear to give a real interpretation of the action of the church in connection with the economic, social and political institution which the Old World bequeathed to our Republic. Much as we deplore their intemperate speech,

we do not question their motives—they were too much a part of those tragic experiences to measure the issues calmly and justly, and their feelings were inflamed by a literature steeped with bitterness and misunderstanding. We do not accept the conclusions of any side in that controversy. In addition to the records of the church, we shall take into consideration the discussions in Congress, the publications of the American Historical Society, and other collateral sources. Whatever may have been allowable in the past, we believe that ours is no time for indulging a bitter and vindictive spirit. The problem of sectional vindication has been transferred from the shoulders of the actors to the yellowing pages of history; and from those pages of lurid oratory and bitter invective, we are persuaded that no side may hope for righteous justification.

It shall be our purpose to preserve as far as possible the chronological sequence of events; but we have found it difficult to set up arbitrary divisions which would not be clumsy and even cumbersome. There are certain interests which will be treated independently of any chronological scheme, except that they will appear at the place indicated by the greatest agitation and activity on those subjects. Last of all, we shall endeavor to give a frank and sympathetic interpretation of the history and the problem of Methodist reunion. This we do because it is primarily a factor of our history; but we give it place with a no less sincere hope that we may be able to make some contribution toward a successful and righteous approach to that much desired and, we believe, wholesome and Christian consummation. With this general statement of purpose and plan, we invite the reader to journey with us as we study the Wesleyan movement, from Epworth rectory and the beginning of the eighteenth century down to the present time.



## CHAPTER I

### JOHN WESLEY

THE plan of this work does not include a detailed biography of John Wesley; but a fair understanding of his career is necessary both for the satisfaction of Methodist people and as an approach to the history of the church which he founded. Louis XIV of France is said to have interrupted a judge with the haughty declaration: "I am the state"—a boast as untrue as it was lacking in royal grace and refinement. John Wesley might, however, have made such a claim respecting his own relation to the first fifty years of the Methodist movement without subjecting truth to a very severe strain. As we shall see, his authority was practically absolute; he was without anyone to dispute his leadership; and his will was a law not open to question in Methodist circles. One may not be able to agree with all that Green, the English historian, says of Mr. Wesley's influence upon the eighteenth century; but there will be little disposition to question the statement regarding Mr. Wesley and the Revival: "He embodied in himself not this or that side of the great movement, but the very movement itself."

A glance at the long list of books dealing with Mr. Wesley and the Methodists will suffice to convey an idea of the importance and distinction of the man whose work has held captive the imagination of the world for nearly two hundred years—a story which is still one of the most inspiring chapters in the record of personal achievement. We can do no more here than give an outline which may help to recreate the age in



which he lived and relate him to the movement which he originated. In undertaking this, we do not overlook the fact that a miniature, whether of painting or of biography, must be a work of art or it is apt to be a crude betrayal of its subject. We shall endeavor to make clear and understandable the outline of Mr. Wesley's character and work, and sources will be indicated for the benefit of those who care to make investigation for themselves.

John Wesley, the fifteenth of a family of nineteen children, was born in Epworth rectory, Lincolnshire, England, June 28, 1703. His father was Samuel Wesley and his mother Susanna Annesley Wesley. On the side of both father and mother, he was descended from a long line of distinguished Dissenters, English gentry and clergymen, some of whom suffered cruel persecution following the restoration of Charles II. Samuel Wesley, the father, was first sent to the free school of Dorchester, and when he was fifteen years of age he went to London at the expense of Dissenter friends to prepare for the Nonconformist ministry. During his stay in London his mind underwent a change, and he transferred to Oxford to prepare himself for orders in the Church of England. This was the first break in the Nonconformist connection of the family. On the side of Mr. Wesley's mother, the inheritance of Nonconformity was more direct and substantial, and it was from her that he received a spirit of independence which played an important part in his life. To his inherited strain of religious attitude must be added, of course, his individual response to the spiritual needs of the age.

The first ten years of John Wesley's educational and spiritual training was presided over by his mother; and, regardless of her breaches of modern educational psychology, no decade of his life was made to serve

higher or holier ends. On January 28, 1714, he was admitted to Charterhouse—a foundation upon which forty boys were educated without charge. Although he was less than eleven years of age, his entrance at Charterhouse was really the end of his connection with Epworth, except for correspondence with the family and the time that he served as his father's curate, from April to September, 1726, and again for a longer period in 1729.<sup>1</sup> After a little more than six years at Charterhouse, he entered Christ Church, Oxford, July 13, 1720. At this College made famous by Cardinal Wolsey, he had an annual allowance, as a Charterhouse student, of forty pounds, and he remained there until elected Fellow of Lincoln College, March 28, 1726. The next nine years, with the exception of the time spent as curate at Wroote, he spent in residence at Lincoln College, and he maintained a connection with the College for more than a quarter of a century.<sup>2</sup>

No careful person has claimed that John Wesley was a great scholar. He was physically frail and he may not have had the talent for profound scholarship; but there can be no denying the fact that he was a great student, and he came to be a man of great versatility. It is said of Abraham Lincoln that he formed the habit of reading a book and then clothing its thought in his own words. Mr. Wesley did not do that, but he always made a synopsis of the books which he read—he “collected,” as he said.<sup>3</sup> In that way, he made himself master of vast and varied fields of thought.

He was ordained deacon in the Church of England, September 29, 1725; and priest, September 22, 1728. Just prior to the time of his return to Lincoln College from his curacy at Wroote, October, 1729, Charles Wesley, William Morgan and Robert Kirkham organ-

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<sup>1</sup> *The Journal of John Wesley*, Curnock, Vol. I., p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *John Wesley*, Overton, pp. 11, 15.

<sup>3</sup> *The Journal of John Wesley*, Curnock, Vol. I., p. 20.

ized what has since become famous as the "Holy Club." Upon his return to Oxford, John Wesley immediately became its guiding spirit and was known as the Curator or Father of the Holy Club. This club had as one of its aims, spiritual culture—a feature common to many such groups throughout England. It had also a literary feature; but its chief distinction lay in the ability and the intense earnestness of those who composed it. Under the lead of William Morgan, the club began a ministry to those who were in jail and then to the poor, activities which were an eloquent prophecy of what was to be the mission of John Wesley and the Methodists. William Morgan left Oxford, June 5, 1732, and soon after died of tuberculosis; Robert Kirkham left to become his uncle's curate; but others were added and the club continued its activity for a number of years. In 1735, John and Charles Wesley left for the ill-starred mission to Georgia. The Holy Club did not cease to exist on that account, but its influence and importance were greatly diminished. It had, however, served its purpose in the discovery of a leadership that was destined to wield a mighty influence in shaping the life of the world.

It was while John Wesley was a Fellow of Lincoln College that he came under the influence of the writings and the personality of William Law and the German mystics. He read Law's *Christian Perfection*, and *A Serious Call to a Holy Life*; and he paid visits to Putney to counsel with Law, who later became one of the German theosophists. Fortunately for Mr. Wesley and the Methodist Church, he was too well established in his own theological beliefs to be swept away by the pietistic casuistry and asceticism of his new teacher; but there can be no doubt that for a time he was greatly affected by his mystical theories of salvation and a holy life. In a letter written to his brother, Samuel,

under date of November 23, 1736, he said: "I think the rock upon which I had the nearest made shipwreck of the faith was the mystics."<sup>4</sup> Later, as he neared the English coast on his return from Georgia, he wrote a review of some of his religious convictions; the paper was dated January 25, 1738, and he says of the mystics: "Only my present sense is this—all other enemies of Christianity are triflers; the Mystics are the most dangerous; they stab it in the vitals, and its serious professors are likely to fall by them."<sup>5</sup> These two statements, separated by nearly two years, are clear indications of the peril which he experienced in such teachings.

On October 14, 1735, John and Charles Wesley, Benjamin Ingham and Charles Delamotte left London for Gravesend to embark with General Oglethorpe for Georgia. John Wesley went as a missionary under the auspices of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and Charles went as private secretary to General Oglethorpe. John Wesley's letter, dated October 10, 1735, shows that he went out with an exalted conception of his mission and in a mood of high spiritual adventure.<sup>6</sup> He was evidently little prepared for the rude disillusioning which awaited him. His thoughts of spiritual conquest related to himself, however, as well as to the savages of the tribe of Tomo-chichi.

Wesley's Journal shows that the time at sea was filled with activity and with such public and private ministries as a crowded ship and a stormy voyage made possible. After a voyage of three and a half months, the ship came to anchor near Tybee Island in the mouth of the Savannah River, February 5, 1736. The one incident connected with the voyage, which was des-

<sup>4</sup> *Life of John Wesley*, Tyerman, Vol. I., p. 133.

<sup>5</sup> *Life of John Wesley*, Moore, Vol. I., p. 283.

<sup>6</sup> *Life of John Wesley*, Tyerman, Vol. I., pp. 115, 116.



tined to exercise a permanent influence upon the life and thought of Mr. Wesley, was his contact with the twenty-six Moravian Christians, among whom was Bishop David Nitschmann. These Moravians were fleeing from persecutions in their homeland and were on the way to join their expatriated brethren in Georgia. We have already noticed Mr. Wesley's susceptibility to mysticism; and he now came under the spell of a more direct and practical phase of it in the behavior of these fellow passengers. Their songs and their composure in the midst of the storm caused him to distrust his own quaking heart, and the result was a disquieting of his soul which continued until the latter part of May, 1738, when he entered into that exalted Christian experience which marked the birth-hour of Methodism.

No venture of John Wesley's life was more disappointing to him than was the mission to Georgia. His dream of converting the Indians was not realized, for he spent his time in a conventional ministry to the white settlers in Savannah. This was not to his liking and he made vigorous protest to General Oglethorpe, but all to no purpose. Charles Wesley was assigned to the headquarters of General Oglethorpe at Frederica, where he soon became embroiled in difficulty to such an extent that his life was in peril. He returned to Savannah on May 16, 1736, and in July he left for Charleston whence he sailed for England, August 11. John Wesley had no serious trouble in Savannah until after the end of the first year. The story of his unhappy romance with Miss Sophy Hopkey and her subsequent marriage to a Mr. Williamson is so well known as to require only passing notice.

Mr. Wesley appears to have taken literally Paul's admonition to Timothy: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with



all longsuffering and doctrine." He was a staunch adherent of rule, and he was merciless and indiscriminate in his attack upon every form of wrong doing. He refused to baptize the baby of bailiff Parker except by dipping, unless the parents would certify that it was "weak;" he rebuked an officer of a man-of-war for swearing; and he made the mistake of telling Mrs. Williamson, Miss Sophy Hopkey, what he "thought reprovable in her conduct;" and a month later he repelled her from the holy communion. For this last affront, he was indicted for defamation of Mrs. Williamson's character, and he was sued for one thousand pounds—the customary American \$5,000. Mr. Causton, the Magistrate and an uncle of Mrs. Williamson, said: "Mr. Wesley did this merely out of revenge because Sophy would not have him." Mr. Wesley repelled Mrs. Williamson from the communion table because she had not given him notice of her intention to commune—the very rule which the Bishop of London invoked against the Methodists in 1744.

John Wesley appeared six or seven times to answer the suit and indictment, but he failed to secure a hearing of the case, and when the web of slander and persecution grew more and more troublesome and offensive he resolved to return to England. He notified Mr. Causton, the Magistrate, of his purpose; posted an advertisement of his intention in the Great Square and made ready to leave. That afternoon orders were given to the officers to prevent his departure; but he left about eight o'clock in the evening and after a perilous journey of four days, he reached Charleston and he embarked for England, December 22, 1737.

Mr. Wesley left Georgia disappointed in hope, humiliated in mind and disquieted in soul. It is not unlikely, however, that his stay in America was one of the most valuable experiences of his life. He seems

to have been at the parting of the ways, and the freedom and unconventionality of the New World made it possible for him to strip off the traditions, the restraints and the customs of religion, and to discover the values of Christianity for himself. It was here also that his thought received direction toward some of the distinctive features of the organization which he was to set up later. But the greatest of all the factors in his mission to Georgia was his contact with the Moravians. He often remarked upon their simplicity, brotherly love, cheerfulness and the absence of all evil speaking—things which fitted well into the scheme of his own intensely spiritual nature. A few days after he landed in England he met Peter Bohler, and his appreciation of the Moravians was greatly strengthened. There was a ring of sincerity and earnestness about Bohler which gripped his very heart, and it was largely through the influence of this consecrated man that he came into the conscious experience of salvation, or as he expressed it, his "heart was strangely warmed," in Aldersgate Street, May 24, 1738. Following that experience, his thoughts turned to Herrnhut, the Moravian settlement in Germany, and three weeks later found him at Gravesend again, this time he was embarking for a three months' visit to the home of these devout people.

It was in this Bohemian retreat of Moravian religion that the splendid poise of John Wesley was first discovered. There he appraised their faults as well as their virtues. He loved them for their loyalty to the fundamental facts of vital Christian experience, and for the rigid discipline of their lives. But he was a man of initiative and action, and he was quick to perceive the lack of militancy in their faith. He could not look with favor upon what he felt to be their lack of doctrinal consistency, particularly their attitude

respecting the ordinances of the church. He was offended by their ecclesiastical conceits and he could not accept their exaggeration of the terms of the gospel. These things, together with their accommodation of Scripture to theory, seemed to him to offer hospitality to all kinds of fanaticism. The record shows that he kept his emotional impulses under control throughout his stay.

On November 11, 1739, Mr. Wesley opened the Foundry which was the headquarters of the United Societies until the building of Wesley's Chapel in City Road in 1778. The Fetter Lane Society was torn with dissensions; he attended its meeting, July 20, 1740; at the conclusion of the service, he read a paper stating his disagreements with the organization; and he withdrew from the Society.<sup>7</sup> Eighteen or nineteen members went with him; but the issue with the Fetter Lane Society resulted in an unhappy contest which cost him some of his most loyal friends—John Cennick, Benjamin Ingham, Charles Delamotte and, for a time, even Charles Wesley wavered. The separation from the Moravians was, nevertheless, as plainly providential as any other step connected with the origin of Methodism. On the experimental and practical side, Mr. Wesley had much in common with them; but their doctrinal inconsistency and their orderless and unconstructive policy had nothing to offer his methodical mind. Although Mr. Wesley regarded the Fetter Lane Society as an incoherent group, he did not lose interest in it; and he did all that he could to help them to compose their differences; but he was never directly connected with it after his withdrawal.

Once John Wesley's organization had been freed from the encumbrance of Moravian mysticism and inaction, "the spawn of mystic divinity" he called it, the

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<sup>7</sup> *The Journal of John Wesley*, Curnock, Vol. II., p. 370.



new movement began to press toward the achievement of world conquest—the radiant vision of the Founder. Mr. Wesley's development of the policy of Methodism was not in any sense the setting up of a mechanical framework of control. It was instead a series of adaptations and adjustments which sought to secure effective relation to the task, but without the subordination of the evangelistic passion in which the movement originated. He had a clear conception of his "World Parish," but he never proposed a regulation until it became a necessity of the work itself, and sometimes it appeared to his helpers to have been a tardy yielding to an inevitable course.

The first organic development of Methodism, the society, was not an innovation, but the *adoption* of a group organization well known in the religious life of England. The society had long been resorted to by deeply pious people as a means of spiritual instruction and culture; and the Holy Club reflected Wesleyan acquaintance with such groups. Mr. Wesley organized the pious people of Savannah into a society; and the Aldersgate Street society was a miscellaneous group under Moravian control. Mr. Wesley soon came to know that there was no place for Methodist passion and fervor in the Established Church; he turned, therefore, to the only existing form of organization which offered hospitality to the movement nearest his heart. His contribution was the introduction of the element of federation, through which a time-honored means of spiritual culture was made effective and powerful; and his ecclesiastical genius was revealed when he made the Foundry the first unit of the "United Societies." The independent societies have vanished and their influence has been forgotten; but the United Societies became an irresistible force which carried the passion and the ideals of John Wesley to the ends of the earth.

When Whitefield broke away from the conventions of church worship and began to preach in the open, Mr. Wesley says: "I could scarcely reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me an example on Sunday; having been all my life (till very lately), so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church."<sup>8</sup> This statement shows his resistance of innovation. But when the doors of the Establishment were closed in his face he refused to admit that the chief end of church organization is to preserve decency and order in the forms of worship, and he would not abandon his mission to unsaved souls. On Monday, April 2, 1739, he spoke to three thousand people "from a little eminence" of ground adjoining the city of Bristol.<sup>9</sup>

His next step after adopting field preaching was the employment of unordained men as helpers. The growth of the Revival and the unwillingness of the clergy to give countenance to the movement made such an expedient imperative. He sanctioned John Cennick's preaching to the Kingswood colliers in June, 1739, but when Thomas Maxfield began to preach at the Foundry it was without his authorization. When Mr. Wesley heard of it he hastened to London to put an end to it; but he was stopped by the discreet counsel of his mother: "John, take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him for yourself"<sup>10</sup>

Maxfield's breach of ecclesiastical order was simply a yielding to the irresistible urge of the Spirit within

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 167.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>10</sup> *Life and Times of John Wesley*, Tyerman, Vol. I, p. 369.



him; and when Mr. Wesley thought the matter through he realized that he must employ lay preachers or lose his opportunity to save the people. He wrote Charles Wesley, April 21, 1741, saying: "I am not clear that brother Maxfield should not expound at Greyhound Lane; nor can I yet do without him. Our clergymen have miscarried full as much as the laymen; and that the Moravians are other than laymen I know not."<sup>11</sup> Here again we see the ecclesiastical statesman being hammered out on the anvil of ruthless necessity. He was not choosing a method, but was accepting the inevitable. It is common among students of the Methodist Revival to ascribe special distinction to the little handful of clergymen who loyally and sympathetically supported Mr. Wesley; and we would not take anything from the honor that is due them; but of infinitely greater importance was the support of his lay preachers. They made it possible for Mr. Wesley to cover England with an intensive cultivation which saved the Revival from the collapse in which such movements often terminate.

Next in order was the class-meeting. Its origin was somewhat different from the other practices, since necessity was only incidentally the occasion for its introduction, and it originated in connection with Mr. Wesley's work. On February 15, 1742, the society at Bristol organized itself into groups of twelve for collecting a penny a week from the entire membership, the sum to be applied on the chapel debt. A leader was placed over each group and his report to the stewards related to the lives of the people as well as to the offering. Mr. Wesley was quick to sense the value of such an approach to the membership of the societies; and on March 25 following, the class-meeting was introduced in London, and it immediately became

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<sup>11</sup> *The Journal of John Wesley*, Curnock, Vol. II, p. 448.

a part of the economy of Methodism.<sup>12</sup> In this step, Mr. Wesley was an eloquent example of his own doctrine: "We are always open to instruction, willing to be wiser every day than we were the day before, and to change whatever we can change for the better."

The last feature of Wesleyan economy to be evolved was the Conference. The quarterly conference originated as a quarterly visitation of Mr. Wesley to inquire into the spiritual progress and brotherly love of members of the societies—a kind of enlarged class-meeting. He continued this form of personal supervision of the membership at least to 1787, when he describes it as an "unpleasing work" and says that he still continues the visitation in London, Bristol, Dublin and Cork. The first annual conference convened at the Foundry in London, June 25, 1744, and it was entertained at the home of Lady Huntingdon where John Wesley preached from, "What hath God wrought?" Six clergymen were present: John and Charles Wesley, John Hodges, Henry Piers, John Meriton and Samuel Taylor. The first day, after the Conference had convened, Thomas Richards, Thomas Maxfield, John Bennet and John Downes, lay preachers, were invited and sat with the clergymen,<sup>13</sup> and that seems to be the most that is known of its membership. The discussions of the Conference revolved about their spiritual quest, and the very week that followed we find them purging the society of those who were not living according to the gospel. With the setting up of the annual Conference, the frame work of Methodist organization was practically complete and the church was definitely on the highroad to ecclesiastical independence. For, in the end, the completeness and the self-sufficiency of Methodist polity, not the Deed of

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 528, 535.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 143, 144.

Declaration, was responsible for the separation of the Societies from the Church of England.

While Mr. Wesley was adapting his polity to the emergencies that arose, he was not unmindful of the preparation necessary to equip his people for the larger field into which they would certainly come. He, therefore, set himself to the task of developing educational agencies to serve the Methodist people. Kingswood school for the children of the colliers was established in 1739, and in 1748 it was enlarged to include a school for the training of preachers. The regulations prescribed allowed of no relaxation whatever. One writer says that the students were put through a course of learning that would not have disgraced the Sorbonne, and, as a relaxation, they were sometimes permitted to see a corpse. The administration of the school was one of the difficult tasks of Mr. Wesley's life, but there can be no doubt that its influence was a distinct factor in the building of Methodism.

One of the most valuable aids to Mr. Wesley and his work was the printing press. No man ever made greater or more effective use of it as a means for disseminating knowledge than he did. His publishing activities were as remarkable as the man himself. His own works occupied fourteen large octavo volumes; he published one hundred and seventeen revisions and abridgements of other works; and in collaboration with Charles Wesley, he published forty-seven poetical tracts and volumes.<sup>14</sup> It would not be extravagant to say that the publishing work carried on by Mr. Wesley would have filled the measure of an ordinary life, but with him it appeared to have been almost a recreation.

One of the most remarkable features of the Methodist establishment is the itinerant system of ministerial supply. Like other Wesleyan practices, it was

<sup>14</sup> *The Centenary of Wesleyan Methodism*, Jackson, p. 88.

simply a means for meeting the ever increasing need of the work; and it was copied after Mr. Wesley's activity in the field. While the founder of the church lived, he was the absolute director of the army of itinerants; but at his death that power passed by the Deed of Declaration to the Conference and there it remains.

No more beautiful tribute was ever paid to the administrative genius, or to the justness of a great leader than was paid by an eminent lawyer to John Wesley. He said: "The only government, so far as it was a government, that the Methodists recognized, rested in his will, and reposed, and confidently and safely reposed, upon his virtue and piety. He appointed the preachers. In him was vested the property of the Church. He controlled it in everything; and the members who devotedly followed him were too happy to live under the government of such a man."<sup>15</sup> This statement does not mean that there were no dissensions in the ranks of Methodism under Mr. Wesley; but it does mean that when the doings of his life were examined a half-century after his death, the integrity of his heart was unquestioned.

Following the completion of the framework of Methodist government, the societies moved on in ever widening circles and with unabated passion for the salvation of the people. But the success achieved did not secure for Mr. Wesley and his preachers either respect or protection. There was not a corner of Britain where they were free from insults. For the first ten or fifteen years, Mr. Wesley was subjected to every variety of rudeness and indignity, from being hooted at and cried down to that of physical violence. Rowland Hill called him "A venal profligate," "a wicked slanderer," "an apostate miscreant," and "a grey-headed enemy of all righteousness;"<sup>16</sup> and Augustus Toplady, the author

<sup>15</sup> Hon. Reverdy Johnson in *Methodist Church Property Case*, p. 327.

<sup>16</sup> Wesley, Laver, p. 135.



of "Rock of Ages," was not less violent in his abuse. Gradually, however, Mayors, Magistrates, Judges, and even King George II came to the rescue of the Methodists. King George said in the Council: "I tell you, while I sit on the throne, no man shall be persecuted for conscience' sake."<sup>17</sup>

When mob violence failed to suppress the Wesleyan Revival the clergy, except a few staunch friends of Mr. Wesley, refused him the use of their churches, although he was a fully ordained man whose life was above reproach. When the church at Epworth was denied him he stood on the corner of his father's grave-stone and preached; and when others were refused him he took to the fields and preached to the people by thousands. It is a very simple matter to close a church, but to close the hungry hearts of the people is not so easily done. The Revival swept over England like a prairie fire on the Western plains; and Mr. Wesley, opposed as he was, soon came to have the greatest personal following of any preacher in England, not excepting George Whitefield. The spread of the Methodist movement did not incline the clergy to give up the fight, and it became the consistent practice of nearly all of them to refuse the holy communion to the Methodists. Even Mr. Wesley himself was repelled. In refusing the communion to the Methodists, they denied both the ministry of Mr. Wesley and the experience of the people. But the flame of revival passion burned undiminished despite the unseemly exclusion of Methodist communicants from the altars of the Church.

As a last weapon of offense, the bishops refused to ordain any of Mr. Wesley's preachers. It would be unjust not to recognize the canonical restrictions in episcopal ordinations; but it is not a sufficient apology for

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<sup>17</sup> *Life of John Wesley*, Telford, p. 176.



the bishops to say that the lay preachers were uneducated. Many of the lower clergy in the Church were paid less than twenty pounds per year, and they were not better educated than their poorest parishioners.<sup>18</sup> It is foolish to bow to the conceits based upon the fiction of a divinely imparted authority when that authority is being misused for the suppression of a manifest work of God. The whole attitude of the Establishment was such as to lose to it the sympathy of the world. High ecclesiastics indulged in anonymous diatribes against the Methodists; and a great historic Church deliberately thrust away its opportunity for the religious leadership of the world. So, hand in hand with Francis of Assisi and Ignatius Loyola, John Wesley marched to fame.

Methodist preaching and practice were less readily accepted by the Presbyterian bred Scotch, and the progress of the Revival encountered a different but no less determined resistance. Nevertheless, Mr. Wesley laid a foundation in Scotland which the changes of the years have not been sufficient to destroy. He spent a part of the last summer of his life in Scotland; one of his last pictures was made in Edinburgh; and he preached in Aberdeen, June 25, 1790, just eight months before his death.

The Irish were more responsive to Wesleyan evangelism than were the Scotch, but resistance was not less positive and certainly not of a more dignified type. The Methodists gained a solid footing among the volatile Irish, and Mr. Wesley was very strongly attached to them. From Ireland came some of the most devout and able leaders of the Wesleyan movement; and from the early days, the people across the channel formed a staunch and dependable factor in the mighty Revival

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<sup>18</sup> Wesley, Laver, p. 85.

which developed its message and power in the middle of the eighteenth century. American Methodists are indebted to Ireland for Philip Embury, Robert Strawbridge, Edward Drumgoole, Richard Boardman and others who were the pioneers in bringing the Revival to this side of the Atlantic.

The property and control of the United Societies were held and directed as the personal business of Mr. Wesley. This policy had distinct values at the beginning; for Methodism had neither legal nor ecclesiastical standing. At an early period, Mr. Wesley developed what he called "Model deeds for chapels," by which he settled each parcel of ground or property upon trustees to hold for the use of "THE CONFERENCE OF THE PEOPLE CALLED METHODISTS." These Deeds stipulated that he should hold the power to make appointments for the chapels as long as he lived, and that power to pass to Charles Wesley and to William Grimshaw in the order named, should they survive him.<sup>19</sup> This was but another device of his for solidifying his work and harmonizing its administration. The peril of the scheme lay in the fact that the deeds provided no permanent succession; and if he should die without making a transfer of his rights, the entire movement would disintegrate.

The danger of this situation became more acute and alarming as Mr. Wesley grew older. It was first brought to the attention of the Conference in connection with a controversy over Birstal chapel, where for some unknown reason the deed provided that after the death of John and Charles Wesley and William Grimshaw, the trustees were to elect their preachers monthly and such preachers were to have the sole occupancy of the chapel. This controversy continued through a period of two years, and it had a very disquieting

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<sup>19</sup> *The Life and Times of John Wesley*, Tyerman, Vol. III, p. 417.

effect upon the Conference. Mr. Wesley's health brought further alarm in 1783. In March of that year, he was seriously ill at Stroud for four days; and at the Conference in Bristol, beginning July 29, he was stricken again, and for eighteen days he was in a very precarious condition.<sup>20</sup> At this juncture, Dr. Coke secured the opinion of legal counsel regarding the necessity for a succession; and the Conference took action calling upon Mr. Wesley to interpret the phrase: "The Conference of the People Called Methodists," contained in the "Model Deeds," so as to secure a succession for the three hundred and fifty-nine chapels then held under those deeds.

It is evident that he hesitated to take the final step which was clearly indicated by his age and physical condition, and upon which the Conference insisted. The time had come, however, when the failure to do so might mean the surrender of the achievements of his life. In addition to the situation in England, the outcome of the Revolution in America made a change of control there an absolute necessity. So, out of all this mass of incident and argument, he was brought to realize the imperativeness of the situation. Accordingly, on February 28, 1784, he executed his "Deed of Declaration" upon which is the endorsement: "The Rev. John Wesley's Declaration and Establishment of the Conference of the People Called Methodists. Enrolled in his Majesty's High Court of Chancery."<sup>21</sup> By this document he transferred the property and control of the Wesleyan Societies to one hundred preachers whom he named, a body since known as the "Legal Hundred." The validity of that deed has been tested again and again in the highest courts of law, and it remains as solid and immovable as the Church to which it relates.

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<sup>20</sup> *The Journal of John Wesley*, Curnock, Vol. VI, pp. 399, 438-441.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* p. 481.

The Deed of Declaration created some unrest upon the part of those whose names were not included in the governing body; eight of the preachers withdrew from the connection; the Conference approved Mr. Wesley's recommendation that no preacher's rights and privileges should be abridged because he was not included in the "Legal Hundred;" and soon the readjusted Societies were under way for the realization of the Founder's dream of world conquest for Christ.

The last innovation, Mr. Wesley had probably contemplated for a long time. It was a step made necessary in order to obviate the difficulty occasioned by the refusal of the bishops to ordain persons for the care of the Societies. The refusal had the appearance of an attempt to thwart the Revival by a process of ecclesiastical starvation. The great universities were not opened to Dissenters until long after the close of the eighteenth century; in their refusal of ordination, therefore, the Bishops were in line with well established public policy. After long hesitation and meditation, Mr. Wesley decided upon the bold course of providing a ministry of his own ordination. On September 2, 1784, he set apart Dr. Thomas Coke for the work of a *Superintendent* in America; and, assisted by Dr. Coke and Rev. James Creighton, clergymen of the Church of England, he ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey for the work in America. Afterwards Rev. James Creighton said that Mr. Wesley repented with tears for his ordination of any of his preachers. That statement was made after Mr. Wesley's death, and it does not seem to be supported by any documentary evidence. Certainly the continuous list of ordinations do not give support to the claim. In 1784 three were ordained for America; in 1785 three for Scotland; in 1786 four were ordained; in 1787 five, in 1788 nine; and in 1789 two were ordained. This made a total of



twenty-six persons whom he ordained for work in various fields. There was much criticism of Dr. Coke for assuming the title, "Bishop;" and it has been held that Mr. Wesley never intended such a thing. It is true that Mr. Wesley himself took offense at the action of the American Superintendents in this matter; but, since he authorized and instructed Dr. Coke to consecrate Francis Asbury for the work of a *Superintendent* and later sought the convening of a Conference to elevate Richard Whatcoat to the same position, the charge is made somewhat doubtful. And when he set apart Alexander Mather for exactly the same relation in England, the defence of Mr. Wesley against his own acts is not quite so strong as it might have been had the facts been otherwise.<sup>22</sup>

The resentment against Mr. Wesley for his invasion of episcopal prerogative and his overriding the canonical fiction associated with ecclesiastical ordination was probably much intensified by the realization that it was the final step that would complete the break with Anglicanism. In the disappointment over the failure to subjugate the Methodists, the Church probably thought little of what might be the supreme purpose of all ordinations. The Establishment had so far failed in the holy ends of church existence that a new organization was evolved out of itself, for meeting the spiritual needs of vast multitudes in that decadent age. So, Mr. Wesley approached the end of his journey in a storm of reprobation, different from that in which his public life began and different from that which he had faced throughout his militant career but rooted in the same soil and certainly no less sparing in censure of the man who was destined to live on when his critics had been forgotten. The Founder of Methodism died, Wednesday, March 2, 1791, and the spot where he rests has

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22 *The Life and Times of John Wesley*, Tyerman, Vol. III., p. 441.

been the end of a well-beaten pilgrim path for nearly a century and a half.

A summary of the life and labors of the man who bequeathed Methodism to the world would tend to dwarf rather than to reveal his real proportions. But there are some observations which should be made as a kind of silhouette of his character and attitudes. Tyerman said of him: "He was a clergyman of the episcopal Church of England with the views of a Dissenter, and acting accordingly, there was, of course, in his future proceedings, much that was incongruous and perplexing." That observation might be considerably expanded without doing violence to truth. He rediscovered the fundamentals of Christianity in an age which was thoroughly skeptical and morally corrupt; and his approach to the task was through a Church more interested in class distinctions and ecclesiastical mechanics than in the salvation of the world. He literally groped his way to the experience which was the inspiration of his life and the power for his evangelistic enterprise—his crown of immortality.

He came forth from a Church of England rectory, a "brand plucked from the burning;" he was educated for the priesthood of the Establishment and ordained by its bishops; he held allegiance to its forms and teachings; but his spirit refused to be bound by its limited outlook, or to be satisfied with less than the world-parish comprehended in the Great Commission. He brought to his task conviction, faith, courage—nothing less could have sustained him in the face of the opposition, mobs, poverty, and the other discouragements which he encountered in the building of the Methodist Church.

An unusual characteristic was the apparent understanding of himself. He seems to have had a clear apprehension of his powers, his tastes and his peculi-

arities. A factor, no doubt, in the break with Count Zinzendorf and the Moravians was that he felt that the continuance of the relation would mean a disastrous clash of wills; and much the same influence seems to have been responsible for the separation from Whitefield and the Countess of Huntingdon. There was in each instance a doctrinal and philosophical difference; but John Wesley realized that he had a nature incapable of being subordinated to the will of another. It was not a conceit, but an endowment for which he was responsible to the world and to God. Strange as it may seem, that fact in his make-up did not minister to arrogance, but rather contributed to a spirit of humility and forbearance. He was bitterly attacked by Whitefield, but he refused to reply to the aspersions, saying: "You may read Whitefield against Wesley, but you will never read Wesley against Whitefield." This was less a regard for propriety than it was an indication of the self-mastery which made his work effective. His perfect poise came out in many ways: He kept his course against the relentless opposition of the Church from which he held orders; he resisted the perils of Moravian mysticism and the seductive philosophy of William Law; and he did not surrender to the unconstructive and aimless enthusiasm of Herrnhut. Indeed, he took something from them all without losing his footing on that which is vital and true and everywhere he demonstrated the qualities of mind and heart which gave an infectiousness to his preaching that is still a marvel to men.

Another distinction was his abiding devotion to the field which he first discovered. The ordinary man has a disposition to grow away from the humble beginnings of his life. Methodism had its generative impulse in John Wesley's passion for the souls of the poor; and in the mad rush of his career, he never lost that

interest. His chapels were not built with reference to the beauties of architecture, but to suit the tastes and to serve the needs of the humble folk to whom he had been the minister of God unto salvation. One of his most touching and heart-revealing utterances was made in 1785. He said: "I am become, I know not how, an honorable man. The scandal of the cross is ceased." His soul had lived in conflict so long that calm was to him an intimation of spiritual danger, and public favor carried the implication of treason to his holy task.

As an organizer, it will be readily admitted that Mr. Wesley was a consummate master, and the Methodist Church will be accepted as sufficient proof of the claim. The admission is apt, however, to carry an impression which can not be sustained by the facts. As we have pointed out, he was less a genius in originating machinery than in adapting that which was already in use and was well understood. Besides, every innovation he introduced with great caution. His expansion was not that of an adventurer, but rather that of a defender fortifying the priceless treasure of conquest and achievement. He introduced no practice in advance of its necessity. It can not be said that he followed the line of least resistance; but, perhaps, that he moved in the direction of plainest need; and he never found it necessary to reverse his course on any important measure of his polity. Each succeeding change was but the lengthening of the radius with which he drew ever larger circles from a common center. Consequently Methodism, like Jerusalem, is built "compact together."

John Wesley's place as a preacher is not easily defined. The literature through which he is introduced to Methodist itinerants is severely logical and dry. James Laver says, "The University system of Wesley's day has been described as one long debauch of syllo-



gisms." After reading Mr. Wesley's printed sermons, it is easy to believe that such might have been true. But the literary style and impressiveness of his published sermons give little real clue to his power and quality as a preacher. Despite the omnipresent syllogism, he was ruggedly original in an age that was painfully artificial. His personal appearance was neat and plain; and when he preached, even in the open air, he always wore the conventional robes of a Church of England clergyman. In the pulpit, he was natural, calm, graceful and easy; his bearing was manly; and he spoke with clear voice and in simple, understandable language. He presented the fundamental doctrines of salvation in argumentative style, and with clearness and force, he applied them to the fundamental needs of the soul. He preached the law to the careless, the love of God to the sinful, and the demands of righteousness to everybody. His sermons were not dry essays—they were made vivid and living by a personality a-thrill with a great experience of salvation. His preaching was always a personal testimony and he moved great multitudes, not by tricks of the pulpit or the genius of the preacher, but by the might of the Spirit. Whitefield was an impassioned orator and was popularly ranked as a great preacher; and Charles Wesley's discourses were suffused with the emotions of his poet-soul; but neither of them was comparable to John Wesley in moving an audience or molding the lives of men. He preached an average of eight hundred sermons annually for more than fifty years. He was a keen observer of his audiences, and his discourses were in no small degree responses to the interest of his congregations. His vast store of knowledge and the wide variety of his interests gave him entree to all classes and conditions of men; and he was by every token a prophet of divine realities. "Great is the mystery of

godliness," said St. Paul, and another said with striking felicity and aptness of thought, "Great is the mystery of preaching."

Few men ever lived who had such genius for work. For fifty years, he covered England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales with a thoroughness and a regularity that is the wonder of the world. All the while he was revising works for publication; publishing his own works and the hymns of his brother, Charles; writing controversial letters; carrying on a voluminous correspondence with a great variety of people; and compiling biographical sketches of all his preachers. Much of all this material is uninteresting today, but it is, nevertheless, a monument to the industry and the patience of John Wesley.

In a conversation with John Pool, George Whitefield paid high tribute to the foresight and generalship of Mr. Wesley. Whitefield, the most popular and magnetic preacher of his day, asked Pool if he were still a Wesleyan. In response to his affirmative answer, he said: "John, thou art in thy right place: my brother Wesley acted wisely. The souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined in class, and thus preserved the fruits of his labor. This I neglected, and my people are a rope of sand."<sup>23</sup>

There has developed in recent years a morbid interest in Mr. Wesley's relation to women; not all of it, we think, a credit to the historical fidelity of the authors. However, one thing can be said with confidence: No exaggeration of details has robbed his relations of honor and of a deep undercurrent of spiritual purpose. He fought his own heart for the sake of his work, and he never acquired an understanding of feminine character. In an ill-advised moment he married; it was an

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23 *The Centenary of Wesleyan Methodism*, Jackson, p. 69.

utterly uncongenial union, and its only compensation was the liberation of Mr. Wesley for the work to which God had manifestly set him apart.

John Calvin was a great theologian and by the iron of his logic he built formidable defences for the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. John Wesley was a man with the passion and fervor of a great experience of salvation and he founded a Church which has preached the love of God to the ends of the earth. Inscribed upon the coat of arms of the family into which he was born was the Scripture phrase, "God is love," and those words were prophetic of the life that was destined to lend a deathless fame to that heraldic symbol. In Aldersgate Street, he experienced the transforming power of the Spirit of God and he says, "I felt my heart strangely warmed." Into that simple and artless phrase was gathered the power and the inspiration that was destined to affect the ecclesiastical history of the whole world for centuries to come. He followed the gleam of his great experience; his soul was cramped by the mechanical regimentation of his passion; and he startled the Church with a declaration of ecclesiastical liberty, "The world is my parish;" and in the glorious ecstasies of his death, his good-bye to the world was a bugle-blast of spiritual triumph, "The best of all is God is with us."

He was one of the most highly esteemed men in all England and, in many respects, the best loved man of his day. In the course of the years, he received recognition in Westminster Abbey, that national shrine of English heroes; but better far, he lives and reigns in the affections of a great international Church. When his heart ceased to beat and there was no more a heave of his bosom, sorrowing and grief-stricken friends stood about his couch and lifted their voices in a valedictory hymn. It was the spontaneous tribute of their aching

hearts to the most militant, self-sacrificing, and effective evangel since the days of St. Paul. And in that hymn they sobbed out their devotion to one of the most apostolic men of all history.



## CHAPTER II

### THE EXPANDING HORIZON

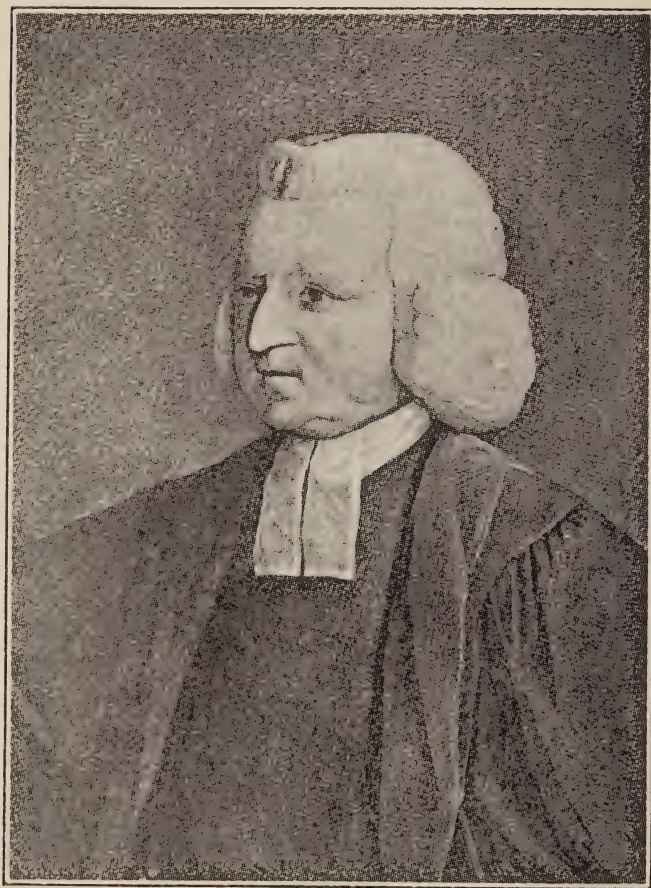
AMERICAN history seems to fall into two distinct segments. We think of *colonial* America as the period in which the New World was being stocked with European importations; and of *national* America as completely divorced from contact with the Old World. There has not been a period since our fathers invaded the primal simplicity of the savage Indian when we were free from European entanglements, nor a time when American life was destitute of originality. The processes of American development, while they have been distinct in character, have always been influenced by the life and problem of the older civilizations. The colonial impulse was not due to the glamour and romance of the New World so much, perhaps, as to the drab reality of the persecution and terror which afflicted the old. Those complicating factors are reflected in every phase of our history and development; and to speak of transporting a movement to us is apt to be somewhat misleading. It does not follow that a great social and religious enterprise is permanently typed in every detail by the land of its origin, nor that in the land of its adoption it may not receive direction and form as original as the mold in which it was first cast.

The introduction of Methodism into the Colonies is a story as thrilling and as full of human interest and invention as that of the rise of the great Revival in England under the immediate leadership and direction of Mr. Wesley. While it is simple enough to locate the

points of beginning, it is throughout an intricate and involved record. We can only give here an interpretation of the movement as a whole; and students desiring more detailed information are referred to the sources. *A Short History of the Methodists in the United States of America*, by Lee; *Lost Chapters Recovered from the Early History of American Methodism*, by Wakeley; and *The Rise of Methodism in America*, by Lednum are among the oldest and the most detailed records of the period. The last two give opposing views of the "priority" controversy between New York and Maryland, or between Embury and Strawbridge. The controversy is probably of less real importance to the history of Methodism than to the supporters of rival locations and favorite sons—a support more ardent now than it was one hundred and seventy years ago.

The incident of the visit of the Wesleys to Georgia is not properly a part of the history of American Methodism; and the ministry of Whitefield, on account of his complete separation from Mr. Wesley, was an independent and collateral movement. When Methodism was planted in America there was already a well established cultural life—a projection of eighteenth century England, modified by the primitive conditions and necessities of the New World. It was by no means a uniform culture; for the process of assimilating the various elements of the population into a distinct American type was far from being complete. This statement is true also of the religious stratification of the country—New England was Calvinistic in faith, Pennsylvania was Quaker, and Virginia was Church of England. The introduction of Methodism, however, did not depend so much upon a hospitable theological atmosphere, as upon finding a place where spiritual want or ecclesiastical dissatisfaction created a need for its peculiar message. The enthusiasms and the emo-





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tional excesses of the Methodists were not so disturbing to the American pioneer as to the more staid and sedate Englishman; but its rigorous exactions as to personal conduct were not more acceptable to the dissolute and licentious colonist than to his brother in sin across the ocean. So the problem in the transference of the Wesleyan movement to the New World was not that of finding tolerance for it, but of creating a hunger for the holiness of life and the purity of spirit which were the goal and emphasis of its message.

Before we begin the study of the actual details of the story, we must devote some attention to a few incidental questions. A surprising fact is that the introduction of Methodism should have been so long deferred. One can scarcely conceive of a great religious movement stirring all England and raising a commotion among all classes and churches; and, yet, remaining unknown in America for approximately twenty-seven years. But such was the case. It would seem that some acquaintance with it must have been had through the Church of England, of which Mr. Wesley was a clergyman. The answer is that the Establishment never accepted the Revival and it would certainly not be disposed to propagate it. But why was it not brought over as an incident of trade? At least some who came as tradesmen would retain their religious allegiance in the New World. But it must be remembered that the converts of Mr. Wesley were neither men of travel nor of trade; they were in the main small tradesmen; artisans, miners, weavers and commercially unimportant folk. The day of Methodism's invasion of commerce and culture had not arrived. Again, it seems that it might have drifted in with the normal flow of emigration. But the flow of English emigrants ceased before the beginning of the Wesleyan Revival in England—America had lost its charm for the English adventurer. There

was, therefore, no natural outlet and no sufficient means or incentive for the immediate and direct propagation of the movement.

A second element of surprise is the voluntary and sporadic character of its ultimate coming. England's reputation as a colonizer would lead one to feel that the transplanting of Methodism should have been more definitely planned; and that such an important event should not have been left to chance agencies. But Methodism was not taken so seriously then as now; and England and the eighteenth century were not controlled by any religious enthusiasms, especially the rigorous and inconvenient exactions of the Wesleyan Revival. So it came about that the message of Mr. Wesley reached America through the ministry of men who had been practically expatriated from their homeland; and the movement was set up more to meet the religious needs of the people than because of the abiding loyalties of those who promoted it. And the composition of the early American societies was, perhaps, even more interdenominational in character than was the case with the English societies.

Finally, it seems that there could scarcely have been found a more inopportune and inauspicious time for the rise of Methodism in America than the period at which it was introduced. The movement was of British origin, and when it was introduced into America the colonies were already in sharp controversy with the mother Country. The "Molasses Act" of 1733 had been practically set aside by the Americans, and smuggling was practiced without shame or apology. In 1764 the "Sugar Act" was passed reducing the duty by one-half, in order to placate the colonists without surrendering the principle involved. Warships were sent to the American coast to enforce the act, and the officers were given power to collect the duties. In addition to

this, prosecutions for smuggling were taken from colonial courts and placed in Admiralty courts. This determined move upon the part of Great Britain in 1764 was followed by the passage of the "Stamp Act" in 1765. And at the very moment of the organization of the first societies in America, the "Sons of Liberty," from Massachusetts to Georgia, were preaching defiance and stirring the passions of the people against England.<sup>1</sup>

In the beginning, two names head what we shall treat as contemporaneous columns of advance. They were Philip Embury and Robert Strawbridge, the one of John Street, New York, and the other of Sam's Creek, Maryland. Embury, although a local preacher before he left Ireland, seems to have made no use of his ministerial commission for about six years. The urge to his evangelistic activity came from Barbara Heck, a woman who deserves to be ranked among the saints of the Methodist Church, both as the inspirer of Embury, and for her faith and sound judgment in the counsels for the promotion of the enterprise. Philip Embury and a group of his friends and neighbors, including Barbara Heck, came from County Limerick, Ireland, and settled in New York in 1760. They were descended from German Palatines who had been driven from their homes fifty years before, by the armies of Louis XIV, in that age-long struggle to make the Rhine an international border. Those refugees were settled upon a large estate in Ireland, and there Philip Embury was born about 1730. According to his own statement, he was converted December 25, 1752. Mr. Wesley made him a local preacher, and he preached for a number of years before leaving Ireland. But, as has been stated, he did not exercise his ministerial commission in America for some years. The evidence is clear that

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1 *The March of Democracy*, Adams, Vol. I, pp. 83, 87.

he and his family became members of Trinity Lutheran Church in New York; he was a school teacher under the direction of its pastor; and his children were baptized there. When he was reproached by Barbara Heck for not doing something to stem the tide of wickedness in their locality, he offered excuses; but he later yielded and began holding services in his own house. This appears to have been about 1766. Later a room was rented near the barracks in Augustus Street; then the "Rigging Loft," a larger place in Williams Street, was secured; and finally Wesley Chapel in John Street was built. The site of the new chapel was first leased from Mary Barclay, widow and one of the executors of the will of Dr. Barclay, second rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in New York. The rental stipulated was a "peppercorn," a term used to indicate a nominal consideration. The deed to the property was executed on November 2, 1770. The building was forty-two by sixty feet, was constructed of ballast stone, and was finished in light blue plaster. Embury, who was a carpenter, assisted in the construction of the building, and made the pulpit himself. He preached the dedication sermon on October 30, 1768. Soon after the arrival of Mr. Wesley's missionaries, Embury moved to Camden, Washington County, New York, where he died in 1775. He was evidently a good man but with no claim to greatness; and his fame is due in considerable part to his place as one of the founders of American Methodism.

The man who shares with Embury the fame of a founder is Robert Strawbridge. He was an entirely different character from Embury; he was more aggressive and he probably had a larger personal following; but with no more substantial claim to greatness. He was born in County Leitrim, Ireland, where he was converted and served as a local preacher under Mr.



Wesley. There is a tradition that he was ordained by Rev. Benedict Swope, a minister of the German Reformed Church; but no proof of this fact has been found. Asbury says that at the first Conference in 1773, an exception in favor of Strawbridge was made, regarding the administering of the ordinances,<sup>2</sup> but it was under such restrictions as to give it the appearance of a concession rather than the recognition of a right. Strawbridge was a man of courage and conviction, and his pronounced opinion brought persecution upon him even before he left Ireland; and in America he was independent and intractable even to the point of being unmanageable. He settled on Sam's Creek in Maryland; built a cabin for his family; and he immediately turned this forest lodge into a preaching place where he proclaimed the message of the Wesleyan Revival. Later he built the famous log meeting-house about a half-mile from his home; and from that uncompleted and rustic center, Methodism spread throughout all the region. The time of the beginning of Strawbridge's ministry is variously estimated from 1762 to 1767. He appears to have been a preacher whose popularity was largely personal, a man of pleasing voice, an excellent singer, and an affable and congenial friend. His name appears in the Minutes for 1773 and 1775 only. He would not be subject to Mr. Wesley's representatives, but he continued to preach in an irregular way, and during the Revolution he assumed pastoral care of some of the societies which he had originally organized. He lived on Sam's Creek for about sixteen years and then moved to a farm in which his friend, Captain Charles Ridgely, had given him a life estate. He died in 1781 and his funeral sermon was preached by Rev. Richard Owen, his son in the gospel, and the man who knew him best.

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<sup>2</sup> *Asbury's Journal*, Vol. I, p. 80; *Old Baltimore Conference*, Armstrong, p. 53.

There may be some doubt as to whether Embury or Strawbridge is entitled to priority in the establishment of American Methodism; but there can be little question as to which one of the contenders was the more effective in reaching the people. The influence of Strawbridge covered a wider field and yielded a richer return than did the ministry of any other of the irregular evangelists of that day. Methodism in his field gained immediate predominance which was maintained for many years. The first native preacher was won under his ministry, and he stamped the movement in that section with the independence and self-confidence of his own personality and ideals.

Robert Strawbridge had as his ablest lieutenant Robert Williams, whose name will be a credit to the Church as long as it endures. He was an English local preacher who came over with the permission of Mr. Wesley, but without an official missionary commission. He sold his horse to pay his debts, and his passage was paid by a Mr. Ashton, a friend and fellow passenger. He arrived in New York in advance of the first missionaries sent over by Mr. Wesley; and after spending about a month in New York, he went to Maryland where he became associated with Strawbridge. He was a business man as well as a preacher and he was distinguished for his energy and enterprise. He published and sold some of Mr. Wesley's books, but the Conference forbade his continuance without permission from Mr. Wesley. He brought William Watters, the first American itinerant, into the connection; and he won Jesse Lee, the Apostle of New England, to Christ. It is sometimes said that he was the first American Methodist to print a book, the first preacher to marry, the first to locate and the first to die. He established the connection with Devereaux Jarratt in Virginia; and, all in all, Methodism in Virginia and

Carolina owes as much to Robert Williams as to any other of the pioneer preachers.

Another of the irregulars who labored in the field with Strawbridge was John King, who reached Philadelphia about the same time that Robert Williams landed in New York. King applied to Pilmoor for a license to preach, but it was not granted at first, and he began preaching without a license. Neither Mr. Wesley nor Asbury seems to have appreciated him; and he was made famous by the advice of Mr. Wesley: "Scream no more at the peril of your soul." He received an appointment at the first Conference held in America, but he located in 1776 and he appears to have died soon after. He introduced Methodism into Baltimore where he preached standing upon a blacksmith's block.

Still another lieutenant of Strawbridge was Richard Owen to whom reference has been made already. He does not appear to have been a man of prepossessing gifts, but was a good man and a faithful worker. His name appears in the Minutes first in 1775 and his last appointment was Fairfax, Virginia, in 1786. He died at Leesburg, Virginia, in September of that year.

It is quite probable that the most valuable and influential accession to the movement as a whole was Captain Thomas Webb, a British soldier who brought to the infant cause the devotion of his soul, the prestige of his position, and the support of his means. He came unheralded into the little room near the barracks, about February 1767; and the brilliant scarlet of his military uniform filled the little band of worshippers with wonder and awe. He does not seem to have stood high in the esteem of Charles Wesley who characterized him as an: "inexperienced, honest, zealous, loving enthusiast;" but his position in the army, his zeal for Methodism, his liberality, and his acquaintance with

Mr. Wesley combined to give him a place not possible to any other of that day. He was one of the most effective evangelists in America, the largest contributor to the building fund for Wesley Chapel, and in a little time he came to be the real leader of the movement. He carried the Wesleyan message to New Jersey, and he established the Church in Philadelphia, where he was instrumental in securing an uncompleted building from the German Reformed Church. In that building St. George's Church was opened in 1769. It was largely through the importunity and correspondence of Captain Webb that the first missionaries were sent over, and throughout his stay in America he rendered an invaluable service to the Methodists. He left the country at the outbreak of the Revolution and died in Bristol in 1796; but he lived to see the enterprise, which he labored to promote and to which he gave without stint, an established and self-supporting Church.

The early stages of the Methodist movement in America were initiated and directed by this little group of a half dozen lay preachers whose only authority was their love of God and their passion for souls. From the heights of "Golden Hill" in New York to far away Virginia, they established Wesleyan centers. A stone church in New York had been dedicated, and St. George's in Philadelphia was on the way to fame before a single representative of Mr. Wesley arrived. When Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor reached Philadelphia they received from the Methodists a fraternal welcome; and from the hand of Captain Thomas Webb, a plan of the American circuit. After the arrival of the missionaries, the irregulars soon disappeared. Embury withdrew to the north and Strawbridge dropped out of the itinerant ranks. Captain Webb retired, as did all the English missionaries except Francis Asbury, but Methodism had been established.



We turn now from the study of the irregular and un-commissioned preachers to the period of the missionaries who came over as the official representatives of Mr. Wesley. These were all young men, but with enough experience under the immediate supervision of the Founder to give the movement the form and the spirit which it had in England. The first effect of the presence of the missionaries was to bring system and order and connectionalism into the enterprise. Every settlement where Methodism had a representative became a link in the chain which reached from New York to Carolina; and the preachers were no longer settled pastors as Embury and Strawbridge had been, but they became Wesleyan itinerants.

Before the construction of Wesley Chapel was begun, "T. T.," presumed to have been Thomas Taylor who was one of the lessees of the ground upon which the chapel was erected, wrote Mr. Wesley a letter setting forth the history of the American development, the plans for a chapel of their own, and he requested a copy of the "Model Deeds for Chapels." Then in true Methodist fashion he concluded his communication with a plea for "An able and experienced preacher; one who has both gifts and grace for the work." Who has not heard the benevolent depreciation of words like these: "There is a real work of grace begun in many hearts, by the preaching of Mr. Webb and Mr. Embury; but though they are both useful and their hearts in the work, they want many qualifications for such an undertaking; and the progress of the work here depends much upon the qualifications of the preacher?" Dr. Wrangel of the Swedish Church in Philadelphia besought Mr. Wesley to send missionaries to assist the Americans, as did Captain Webb also; and Mr. Wesley at last acceded to their desire.

The first two missionaries sent were Richard Board-

man and Joseph Pilmoor. They arrived in Philadelphia, October 24, 1769, and New York and Philadelphia were the centers from which they operated. Boardman's itineraries carried him as far north as Providence and Boston; and Pilmoor, who was a product of Mr. Wesley's Kingswood school, journeyed as far south as Savannah, Georgia. Boardman established a society in Boston, but it seems to have disappeared before Jesse Lee inaugurated the permanent phase of New England Methodism, almost twenty years later. Both of these men, after spending a little more than four years in America, returned to England, January 2, 1774. Richard Boardman remained in the Wesleyan connection until his death; but Joseph Pilmoor became dissatisfied after his return to England and left the Methodists. Subsequently he returned to America and became a clergyman in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and was for a long while rector in a Philadelphia parish. He appears to have retained his loyalty to Methodism and his journals constitute a valuable source of early Methodist history.

The next missionaries to be sent were Francis Asbury and Richard Wright, who landed at Philadelphia, October 27, 1772. Asbury began at once and in earnest the long, strenuous and glorious career to which he was destined. Wright's work was confined chiefly to Maryland and Virginia; but he was not in accord with the ideas of Asbury, and after about a year he returned to England. Asbury remained on the field, even through the trying years of the Revolution, during which he was in retirement at the home of Judge White in Delaware for more than two years. Almost from the time of his arrival, he was the guiding spirit of the work; at the Kent County Conference in 1779, he assumed the control of the societies; he was made Bishop at the Christmas Conference which organized

the Church, in 1784; and he labored without ceasing until death overtook him, March 31, 1816. No man contributed more to the making of American Methodism than did this stern apostle of order and righteousness.

Thomas Rankin and George Shadford, missionaries sent out by Mr. Wesley, landed in Philadelphia, June 3, 1773. They were accompanied by Joseph Yearbry, a local preacher, who was later received into the itinerant ranks. Mr. Wesley appointed Rankin to supersede Asbury as his representative. The first Conference met in Philadelphia, July 14, 1773, and Rankin betrayed at once the stern and seemingly arbitrary disposition which soon brought him into conflict with Asbury and the American preachers. Mr. Wesley issued a recall to Asbury; but he was away on his wide circuit at the time and the outbreak of the War defeated the order. Rankin left America in 1777, but Shadford remained until March, 1778.

No two men were ever more unlike than were Rankin and Shadford. Rankin was probably not as self-willed as some have pictured him, but the modest Shadford is not known as he deserves to be. His record is that of a mediocre preacher, but a man of God. He loved the people, he lived for them and he won them. No American circuit that he served failed to report a substantial gain. His two years on Brunswick circuit in Virginia resulted in approximately two thousand accessions; and it was the first real demonstration in America of the meaning and power of Wesleyan evangelism. A great revival broke out and Brunswick circuit became the center of the greatest Methodist activity in the New World. It swept over Dinwiddie, Amelia, Brunswick, Sussex, Prince George, Lunenburg, and Mecklenburg counties in Virginia, and its influence was felt far beyond that section. The Minutes of 1776

and 1777 show an increase of three or four thousand members, the direct result of the revival. Shadford left America with a record of fruitfulness unsurpassed, and the best beloved of all the Wesleyan missionaries.

The last two preachers sent over by Mr. Wesley were James Dempster and Martin Rodda. They came in 1775 just as the fires of the Revolution were about to break forth. Dempster was from Scotland and was educated in the University of Edinburgh. Mr. Wesley had great regard for him; but he was not able to adjust himself to the Methodist ministry, and he remained in the work less than a year. He later became a minister in the Presbyterian Church and spent his life in America. By a curious turn of fortune, his son, John Dempster, was admitted into the traveling connection of the Methodist Church in 1816,<sup>3</sup> and he gave long and useful service in its ministry. Martin Rodda was an indiscreet and an intemperate Tory, who made untold trouble for the Methodists. He labored around Baltimore, and when his indiscretions brought him into peril he fled to the British fleet for safety. He and Rankin left for England in September, 1777.

Of the eight regular missionaries sent over by Mr. Wesley, five of them returned to England; Pilmoor became an Episcopal clergyman, and James Dempster a Presbyterian minister. Only Francis Asbury remained to lead the gathering hosts of the new Church. It should be said for the credit of Mr. Wesley and his representatives, that not one of the missionaries became a reproach to the cause which he came to represent. All of them had their faults; some of them were disappointed with the Methodist system and withdrew from the Church; and most of them were loyal to their country; but not one of them became a traitor to Christ. In the eight years of their missionary

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<sup>3</sup> *Lost Chapters Recovered*, Wakeley, p. 254.



operations, they laid a permanent foundation for the Methodist Church which was to achieve ecclesiastical independence following the Revolution. They made distinct contribution to the moral and religious life of America, which we do not always appraise at its real value. When Francis Asbury came out of his retreat in Delaware, he took the place of leadership in a cause which was already established in the hearts of the people. As he went from north to south, with clarion voice he called the dispersed sons of Wesley; the ranks filled anew; and Methodism resumed its interrupted march in the conquest of America for Christ.

The coming of the missionaries gave to the Methodist movement in the colonies a new and wider impulse. Although the preachers were under the necessity of operating from the urban centers, they accepted the entire field for their task. In many locations, permanent results were postponed to a much later day, but the missionary was a man of dauntless courage and faith. The local aspect of Methodist development ended with the arrival of the representatives of Mr. Wesley, and it was replaced by the connectional spirit—the soul of Methodist progress. Disconnected sects were joined in a country-wide movement with a great evangelistic purpose and plan. Under the impulse of this new leadership, the societies had a phenomenal growth. There were no reliable membership records before 1769, but there were probably about three hundred Methodists scattered from New York to Virginia. When George Shadford left, the last of the missionaries who retired, more than eight thousand members were reported—a marvelous record of growth for the ten years of missionary labor.

Still another peculiarity of the spread of Methodism in America, was its unequal distribution. Some historians account for this by saying that it was due to

the friendly attitude of a predominant church in one section as against the unfriendly attitude in another. The localities where the Church of England was predominant, for instance, is represented as hospitable ground. That, however, appears to be an assumption which it would be difficult to justify. A more likely explanation is that the people in some places were utterly dissatisfied with their church provision and were ready for change. It was not the friendliness of the Establishment in Virginia, but the disgust of the people on account of the character of the clergy which made a favorable atmosphere for Methodism. On this point, there appears to be pretty general agreement among those who have made careful study of religious conditions in the Old Dominion. Reverend Dev-ereaux Jarratt, rector of Bath Parish in Virginia, spoke of his predecessors in the parish as, "velvet-mouthed preachers," who preached to the people, "Morality, and smooth harrangues, in no wise calculated to disturb their carnal repose, or awaken anyone to a sense of guilt and danger;" and he said, "Most of the clergy, as far as I can learn, preached for a long time, what is little better than deism."<sup>4</sup> Rev. Archibald McRoberts, who was the only congenial and sympathetic friend of Jarratt, renounced the Church of England after spending twenty years in its ministry, and he became a Presbyterian minister. He wrote Jarratt, July 13, 1780, that the English Church owed its authority to an act of the legislature, and not to the word of God—prostituting the sacred institution of Christ to the vilest purposes and characters.<sup>5</sup>

Bishop Meade, commenting on the corruptions of the Virginia clergy, alleges that the charge of gross misconduct is, "Evident from the petition of the clergy

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<sup>4</sup> *Life of Reverend D. Jarratt*, pp. 84, 196.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

themselves to the legislature asking an increase of salary, saying that the small encouragement given to clergymen is a reason why so few come into this Colony from the Universities, and that so many who are a disgrace to the ministry find opportunities to fill the parishes." The Bishop says further: "Such being the case, who can question for a moment the entire accuracy of the account both of the preaching and the living of the clergy in his day as given by the faithful and zealous Mr. Jarratt? and who could blame him for the encouragement offered to the disciples of Mr. Wesley, at a time when neither he nor they thought there could be a separation from the Church of England? Dissent from various causes, was now spreading throughout the Commonwealth; dissatisfaction with the mother-country and the mother-church was increasing, and the Episcopal clergy losing more and more the favour of God and man, when this devoted minister . . . , was glad to avail himself of any aid in the good work he was endeavoring to perform." In still another place, he says: "A pious member of the Church, from somewhere in this region, I believe, wrote to the Bishop of London of the gross ignorance of four clergymen, mentioning them by name, and of the immorality of one of them, comparing them with the learning and the piety of two Presbyterian ministers who had just come into the State, and prophesying the result of these things unless arrested."<sup>6</sup> Even after the colonial regime had ended, he says that Jarratt was humiliated by the ordination of two candidates whom, as a committeeman, he had refused as unworthy; for Bishop Madison substituted another committeeman who passed them. This incident occurred in Petersburg, Virginia in 1792, and Bishop Madison's apology, "Ministers are

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<sup>6</sup> *Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia*, Meade, Vol. I., pp. 16, 17, 469, 470, 474.

scarce, and we must not be too strict." is itself a sufficient defence for the character and courage of the humble man who refused to become a party to a policy that compromised religion and the Church.

It is commonly assumed that the failure to plant Methodism in New England was due mainly to the antagonism and opposition of Calvinism, the accepted theology of that section. There can be no doubt that such did play a part, but we think it is not a sufficient explanation of the postponement. The New Englander was satisfied with the teaching of his church and with the character of its ministry; and when the advance guards of Wesleyan faith and practice appeared he was not ready for a change. But when Congregationalism became politicalized and secularized through its activity during the Revolution, and the Church taught a socialized philosophy rather than religion, the feeling and interest of the people changed. Abel Stevens says that, when Jesse Lee invaded Boston, there were fewer active parishes in the City than there had been fifty years before, and only "Old South Church" of all the Puritan establishment retained its evangelical allegiance. He quotes from the *Great Awakening* by Joseph Tracy, "There were many in the churches, and even in the ministry, who were yet lingering among the supposed preliminaries of conversion. The difference between the world and the church was vanishing away, church discipline was neglected, and the growing laxness of morals was invading the churches."<sup>7</sup> He means that the religious leadership, which had been able to repel the early missionaries of Methodism, had lost its hold upon the people and that they were thereby made ready for any innovation that might offer satisfaction for their hungry souls. They did not accept Jesse Lee without resistance or reservation; but the time was ripe for

<sup>7</sup> *Memorial of the Introduction of Methodism*, Stevens, pp. 37-39.



ecclesiastical change, and Methodism struck its roots deep into the soil of that rock-ribbed home of the Pilgrims.

War is always a disastrous incident in the life of a people, and in nothing is the effect more serious than in the affairs of the church. The outbreak of the Revolution was particularly disastrous for Methodism; and nothing but the favor of God could have saved it from collapse and ruin. To begin with, Mr. Wesley greatly inflamed the minds of the Americans by his "*Calm Address*;" and the Tory activities of Martin Rodda and, in a less pronounced degree, of Thomas Rankin, did little to reassure those who were excited on account of the struggle. Forrest and Wren were imprisoned; Hartley was whipped and imprisoned; Peddicord was severely beaten; Garrettson was almost killed by a mob; and Asbury was fined in Maryland for preaching, was shot at, and was ultimately forced into seclusion for a period of more than two years. In zones of active military operations, the work had to be abandoned; and Benjamin Abbott says that in Trenton, New Jersey, the army turned the Methodist meeting house into a stable.<sup>8</sup> But, notwithstanding the handicaps of war and a vicious public antagonism, the societies added ten thousand members during the progress of the conflict.

In England the difficulties were great enough, but Mr. Wesley was an ordained clergyman and he was supported by a small group of his fellow clergymen who were hospitable to him and to his work. But in America, from the irregular beginnings in 1766, to the day of the establishment of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784, there was not a single ordained Methodist minister, either missionary or native preacher, on the continent. The movement was developed by lay preachers under the direction of Mr. Wesley who remained on the

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<sup>8</sup> *Experience, etc.*, of Rev. Benjamin Abbot, Ffirth, p. 58.

other side of the Atlantic. The people felt very keenly the implications of mendicancy in their having to go to the altars of other churches for every ecclesiastically approved administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Their humiliation finally became the occasion of a revolt which came very near to overturning every prospect of securing a ministry for the Methodists, according to ancient and approved forms of ordination.

The ordination question had troubled the Methodists from the beginning; and from the days of Strawbridge, there had been an insistent demand for the right to administer them. The tenseness of feeling was greatly increased by the war and its complications, and by the number in the societies and classes, who had never been baptized. Even some of the preachers were not baptized. Under date of January 10, 1782, Asbury says: "Brothers M. and F. met me at White Oak Chapel, where A. C.—, one of our young preachers, was baptized by Mr. Jarratt." That statement refers to Adam Cloud who had been admitted on trial in 1781, and who was at that time one of the preachers on Roanoke circuit in North Carolina. In 1779 the Conference of the southern preachers was held at Broken-Back Church in Fluvanna County, Virginia, and it was resolved to ordain preachers for the Methodist societies. An ordination committee was named who ordained themselves, and then proceeded to ordain others who were first elected by the Conference. The adoption of that course resulted in an issue between the northern and southern preachers which threatened the unity of the organization. The next Conference met at Manikintown, Virginia, and Asbury, Watters, and Garrettson appeared as ambassadors from the northern group. At first the southern preachers refused to be conciliated and a split seemed to be certain; but finally it was agreed to suspend the ordinations until Mr. Wesley

might be communicated with, and the suspension was continued from year to year until 1784, when Dr. Coke was sent over with instructions from Mr. Wesley to do the very thing that had been demanded so long.

We have discussed the primary factors in the planting of Methodism; but there are certain secondary facts and influences which deserve some consideration also. A very advantageous and saving fact in the dark period of war and controversy was the great Virginia revival in 1775 and 1776. It stirred anew the spirit of evangelism among the Methodists; and their minds became so engrossed with the mighty manifestations of the presence of God, that controversy and ecclesiastical demands were forgotten for a time, and even the disasters of war were partially offset. The revival brought to the Methodist people a consciousness of the full meaning and power of the Wesleyan movement, and they became strongly attached to its spirit and polity.

Another important fact was the enlistment of auxiliary agencies in the work. There were many who contributed in this manner, but we notice one in particular. Devereaux Jarratt, rector of Bath parish in Virginia, probably meant more to the founding of Methodism in Virginia than any other man outside of the movement. When George Shadford was assigned to Brunswick circuit in 1775, his staunchest ally was this modest and unassuming representative of the Church of England. He placed the prestige of his Church behind the Methodist cause; and Asbury says that he went so far as to ask that his own parish might be included in the Brunswick circuit, so that his people might have the benefit of class and be joined in society.<sup>9</sup>

The first thing to be observed about Jarratt is that

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<sup>9</sup> *Asbury's Journal*, Vol. I, p. 225.

he was a lineal descendant of the type of spirit and experience which produced Methodism. He was the son of a carpenter and his mother died when he was about thirteen years of age. He then fell into the hands of a horse-racing, cock-fighting, farmer brother. He grew up, therefore, with no religious background. In the course of time he became a school-teacher and came in contact with a Mrs. Cannon, a very pious woman of the Presbyterian faith. Under her influence, he was led to an interest in religion and finally to an experience of salvation. His whole approach to Christianity was experimental and practical rather than theological; he developed kinship with the passion and thought of the early Methodists; and even a style of preaching which marked him as one of them. After his ordination, he preached several sermons in London, and he says: "It was strongly suspected I was a Methodist, or something else beside a churchman." But he declares that he had never conversed with a Methodist, nor did he know their principles. During his sojourn in London, he heard Wesley and Whitefield and one of the lay preachers; but he says that, although the two leaders "spoke well and to the purpose," he was little edified.<sup>10</sup> Naturally Jarratt's inclination was toward the Presbyterian ministry, and he expected to cast his lot with that body. But he says: "The general prejudice of the people, at that time, against dissenters, and in favor of the Church, gave me a full persuasion, that I could do more good in the Church than anywhere else. This gave a very decided preference in favor of taking orders in the Church."<sup>11</sup>

The tie of interest which marked him with Methodist sympathies was destined to receive severe testing; for he says that as a preacher of experimental religion in

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<sup>10</sup> *Life of Reverend Devereaux Jarratt*, p. 73.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.



the Establishment: "I was opposed, and reproached, by the clergy—called an enthusiast, fanatic, visionary, dissenter, Presbyterian, madman and what not." Again, "I stood alone for some considerable time; and I dare say no man was ever more cordially abhorred than I was by the clergy in general."<sup>12</sup> So when Robert Williams came to his home in Virginia, the soul of Jarratt was unconsciously in revolt on account of the attitude of the clergy of the Establishment toward his ministry. He was much pleased with Williams and his preaching, by whom he says he was assured that, "Methodists were true members of the Church of England—that their design was to build up, and not divide the Church—that the preachers did not assume the office of priests—administered neither the ordinance of baptism, nor the Lord's Supper, but looked to the parish ministers, in all places, for these—that they travelled to call sinners to repentance—to join proper subjects in society for mutual edification, and to do all they could for the spiritual improvement of those societies." It should be said that this statement was concurred in by the Methodists generally, and by Joseph Pilmoor in particular. Jarratt then quotes Williams as saying, "He that left the Church left the Methodists," and he says for himself, "I put a strong mark on these words."<sup>13</sup> This statement was recorded in 1794, more than twenty years after the incident; and after he had experienced great disappointment in the setting up of the Methodist Church as a separate ecclesiastical body. It should be said here, that he placed an unwise and probably an unwarranted emphasis upon the assurances of Robert Williams. Mr. Wesley had been brought up in the Church of England, but the rank and file of the Methodists had little in common with the Establish-

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 86, 99.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 107, 108.

ment. Time was to demonstrate that no man, not even Mr. Wesley himself, could speak authoritatively and finally for Methodism; and especially under the changed conditions in America, and the unrelenting hostility which the Church of England displayed toward the Methodists on both sides of the Atlantic.

Jarratt says that he first went from house to house in his own parish for "prayer, singing, preaching and conversation;" and in making response to the solicitations for help: "Thus commenced the enlargement of my bounds of preaching, which, in process of time, extended to a circle of five or six hundred miles—east, west, north and south." This ministry, chiefly to the Methodist societies, covered fourteen counties in Virginia and five counties in North Carolina.<sup>14</sup> He confesses frankly that his first giving countenance to the Methodists was to prevent dissensions in the Church such as the Baptists introduced; but that he "jumped out of the frying pan into the fire." When the Established Church was put down and the clergy were deserting because deprived of their livings, he admits that the question of the administration of ordinances became a great problem. After the suspension of the ordinations in Virginia, Jarratt came promptly to the help of the Methodists: "In order to remedy the complaint of the want of ordinances, and to render them steady to the church in future, I took some long rides through several circuits, to baptize their children, administer the sacraments, etc. All which I did without fee or reward—and I continued so to do, as long as the Methodists stood to their profession." He says that in the spring of 1784, in order to make more firm their attachment to the Church, he attended Conference at Ellis's and preached, counselled the preachers, and administered the sacraments.<sup>15</sup> It is clear from these

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 92, 96, 97.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 107, 114

statements that he was rather insisting that a great movement should be bound by individual interpretations; and that he could not realize the wider problem which the Methodists were coming more and more to face.

After the organization of the Methodist Church, he became rather cynical and bitter, particularly toward Dr. Coke whom he refers to as the "little man," and his "little soul." It appears, too, that the Methodists were not more considerate of him. Methodist historians have given prominence to his antipathies; but his long and unselfish service to the societies should be appreciated as a far greater factor in determining our estimate of his character and work. He suffered much at the hands of his own Church for the sake of promoting a genuine work of grace among all classes. When he was attacked for his activity in this regard, he says: "No clamor, opposition, or reproach, could daunt my spirit or move me from my purpose and manner of preaching, or induce me to give flattering titles to any man."<sup>16</sup>

In some respects he was a bundle of paradoxical relations: developed as a Presbyterian; took orders in the Church of England; and typed by Wesleyan evangelism. His Christian spirit and judicial temperament stand out in a fine way in his apology for the emotional excesses of the revival, which he called "wild fire." He quotes Jonathan Edwards: "Wherever these most appear, there is always the greatest and deepest work." He was offended by the confusion of simultaneous prayers; but he says; "It requires much wisdom to allay the wild and not damp the sacred fire." Last of all, it is to the pen of Devereaux Jarratt, an outsider, that we are indebted for the most detailed and appreciative account of the Virginia revival. He

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p. 86.

tells the story without a tinge of jealousy—that the revival affected seven or eight counties in Virginia and that in the circuit of George Shadford in 1776, “Many hundreds have in a few months been added to the Lord. And some are adding still.” Truly he was a friend to the Methodists and he was a noble example of Christian catholicity.

When the representatives of Mr. Wesley came over there were three church buildings, including the log meeting-house which was never completed; and there were three lay preachers and three hundred members scattered over a wide extent of wilderness. In the fifteen years which followed their arrival, Methodist services were held in private residences, barns and court-houses; and the membership grew to fifteen thousand, two-thirds of whom were in Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina. It is impossible to give an estimate of the number of buildings that were erected; but there were eighty-four preachers actively engaged in the work; there was a network of circuits covering New York, New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas and parts of Tennessee; and the circuit-riders were pressing along every trail that led towards the border of settlement and civilization. This is the record which lies back of the convening of the Christmas Conference of 1784 when the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized; and such is the story of the expanding of the Methodist horizon on this side of the Atlantic.



## CHAPTER III

### ECCLESIASTICAL INDEPENDENCE

THE adoption of the Declaration of Independence marked the beginning of a new era in the political and social history of the American settlements; and the retirement of the Wesleyan missionaries was the herald of a no less distinct change in the ecclesiastical life of the people called Methodists. As was to be expected, the Church of England inherited the unpopularity of the government which maintained it; and every movement of British origin or under any form of British control was suspected and opposed by the patriot forces in the colonies. The mistrust of Methodism on account of its British relation was greatly intensified by the *Calm Address* which Mr. Wesley issued in 1775. In that document he undertook an impolitic and offensive support of England against the patriot cause, and the wonder is that his action did not destroy the Methodist movement in America altogether. In addition to the blunder upon the part of the Founder, the societies contributed something to the irritation on their own account. For some reason or other, the Methodists of Virginia, in 1776, engaged in active and open opposition to the move for disestablishment in that Colony; and in the petition which they presented to the Legislature, they definitely allied themselves with the Church of England and against other Protestants whom they termed "common dissenters." As we have stated already, Methodist preachers and leaders suffered much during the Revolution at the hands of mobs and magistrates who were willing to lend themselves to mis-

guided enthusiasms and patriotic prejudices. By 1779, however, sentiment had so completely changed that the Methodists then joined in a petition for dissolving the relation between church and state in Virginia. In that same year, the traveling preachers of the South met in Conference at Broken-Back Church, Fluvanna County, Virginia, and proceeded to ordain themselves without reference to historic forms of succession. Both the Established Church and Mr. Wesley were involved in this unwise spirit of independence and revolt. In our time it would probably be attributed to the development of the "spirit of nationalism;" but it was due in considerable measure to the resentment of the Methodists on account of being so long denied a duly accredited ministry of their own. By this denial, they had been largely deprived of the privileges of the church to which, as Christians, they were entitled. In any event, the acknowledgement of the independence of the United States made certain a change in the ecclesiastical arrangement under which the movement in America had been developed; and it made all the more necessary the establishment of an independent ministry with the privileges, the power and the freedom to meet the changed conditions and the growing needs of the Methodist societies in the new country. Whatever of obtuseness might be charged against Mr. Wesley in some other matters, it must be admitted that in this he sensed accurately the situation which he and his cause must face and he set himself immediately to the task of making ready for the issue.

Mr. Wesley grappled long and earnestly with the problem of securing ordained clergymen to assist him in his work. He often importuned the bishops of the Established Church to ordain men for his societies, but without success. Upon his account, Dr. Barnard Bishop of Londonderry, Ireland, ordained Thomas Max-





DR. THOMAS COKE

Organizer and Bishop of Methodist Episcopal Church, and  
Prime Minister of Methodist Missions



field. The Bishop said: "Sir, I ordain you to assist that good man (Mr. Wesley), that he may not work himself to death."<sup>1</sup> After a few years, Maxfield deserted the Wesleyan connection and left Mr. Wesley in greater straits than ever. No bishop would come to his assistance, and in sheer desperation, he "enlisted the services of a rather shadowy Greek Prelate, Erasmus, Bishop of Arcadia" in Crete.<sup>2</sup> Erasmus ordained John Jones, a man of considerable learning, a former master of Kingswood school, and a long-time helper of Mr. Wesley, for whom both he and his brother, Charles, had vainly sought ordination at the hands of Anglican bishops. This incident gave such offence, and Charles Wesley's opposition became so pronounced and annoying that Jones left the Methodists, procured reordination from the Bishop of London, and was rector of Harwich for the remainder of his life. At this juncture John Richardson, a young Yorkshire curate who was episcopally ordained, was awakened under the preaching of Thomas Rankin. He joined the Methodists in 1763 and became a valuable assistant to Mr. Wesley.<sup>3</sup>

For a long while every means of securing ordination for Wesleyan preachers had seemed to be closed, except to ordain by presbyters—the practice followed for two hundred years by the Church at Alexandria. Mr. Wesley had pondered this course for many years, and in the month of February, probably the 14th, 1784, he invited Dr. Coke to his private chamber in London and outlined to him his thought concerning America and the matter of providing an ordained ministry for the societies in that country. He proposed the ordination of ministers by presbyters, and the appointment

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<sup>1</sup> *Life of Rev. John Wesley*, Moore, Vol. II., p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> *John Wesley*, Overton, p. 198; *Life and Times of John Wesley*, Tyerman, Vol. II., p. 486.

<sup>3</sup> *Life and Times of John Wesley*, Tyerman, Vol. II., pp. 507, 508.

<sup>4</sup> *Life of Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D.*, Drew, pp. 63, 64.

of Dr. Coke to be superintendent over the entire work.<sup>4</sup> In this statement of purpose which Mr. Wesley made to Dr. Coke, he seems to have made no mention of Asbury; but later Dr. Coke, who appears to have been dubious as to the acceptability of such a plan to the Americans, made the first reference to Asbury, and the suggestion of his inclusion as joint superintendent was probably his letter to Mr. Wesley August 9, 1784. Dr. Coke argued with Mr. Wesley for the abandonment of timidity as to procedure, and for the assumption of a conciliatory attitude toward the Americans, particularly towards Asbury. He told Mr. Wesley, and wisely so, that nothing should be trusted to the willingness of presbyters on the other side of the water, and he insists that he be consecrated for the work of a superintendent by the imposition of Mr. Wesley's hands. Assisted by Rev. James Creighton, a presbyter of the Church of England, Mr. Wesley consecrated Dr. Coke; and the three ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, first as deacons and then as elders. This was done at Bristol, September 2, 1784.<sup>5</sup>

The course of events up to this point is simple enough; but when Mr. Wesley refused to admit the implication of his ordinations, the story becomes more complicated. Dr. Coke made the matter perfectly clear in his letter to Mr. Wesley of August 9, 1784. Charles Wesley was in no doubt as to what his brother had done, for he wrote Dr. Chandler that his brother, John, had "assumed the episcopal character, ordained elders, consecrated a bishop and sent him to ordain our lay preachers in America." A recent biographer of Mr. Wesley says, "Inconsistency is the privilege of a genius;" and he argues that Mr. Wesley's action was hopelessly inconsistent, and that he was torn between his love for the Church of England and his own rela-

<sup>5</sup> *Life and Times of John Wesley*, Tyerman, Vol. III., pp. 428-435.

tion to the very practical and distressing needs of the American Methodists. He asserted that Mr. Wesley should have left "succession" out of consideration, and that he should have acted upon the theory of his mother who, in defence of the ministry of Thomas Maxfield, held that the validity of a Christian ministry is proved not by its credentials, but by results.<sup>6</sup>

Washington Irving, with characteristic shrewdness, said that the witches were burnt to gratify the populace, but that they were tried for the satisfaction of posterity. So we may say that the superintendency of the Methodist Church was established to meet a need which could be met in no other way; it belongs to the history of the movement; and it has amply justified its institution. It has stood the tests of one hundred and fifty years of operation, and to argue its ecclesiastical regularity is to raise unnecessary doubts. In the study of the organization of the Methodist Church in America, however, we must consider what Mr. Wesley intended to do; for it is a decision which involves many things which came up in the founding of the Church. Strange and inconsistent as it may seem to us now, Mr. Wesley did intend to set up a ministry for American Methodism; but he evidently did *not* intend to create a church which would be separate from the Church of England and independent of himself. The ordination certificate given Dr. Coke reads:

"To all to whom these presents shall come, John Wesley, late Fellow of *Lincoln College in Oxford*, Presbyterian of the Church of *England*, sendeth greeting.

"Whereas many of the people in the Southern provinces of *North America*, who desire to continue under my care, and still adhere to the Doctrines and Discipline of the Church of *England*, are greatly distressed for want of Ministers to administer the sacraments of

<sup>6</sup> *John Wesley*, Lunn, pp. 343-346.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to the usages of said Church: And whereas there does not appear to be any other way of supplying them with Ministers.

"Know all men, that I John *Wesley*, think myself to be providentially called at this time to set apart some persons for the work of the ministry in *America*. And therefore under the Protection of Almighty God, and with a single eye to his glory, I have this day set apart as a Superintendent, by the imposition of my hands, and prayer, (being assisted by other ordained ministers), Thomas *Coke*, Doctor of Civil Law, a Presbyterian of the Church of *England*, and man whom I judge to be well qualified for that great work. And I do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern as a fit person to preside over the Flock of Christ. In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this second day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four.

"JOHN WESLEY."

This is the initial document in the formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the first paragraph after the greeting sets forth in unequivocal language the facts that he had been unable to provide a ministry in any other way; that the American societies were to continue under his care; and that they were to adhere to the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England. At the session of the British Conference in 1785, a statement signed by Mr. Wesley was inserted in the Minutes. After commenting on the situation created by the war and the desertion of their posts by the clergy, he says: "Judging this to be a case of real necessity, I took a step which, for peace and quietness, I had refrained from taking for many years. I exercised that power which I am persuaded the great



Shepherd and Bishop of the Church has given me: I appointed three of our laborers to go and help them, by not only preaching the word of God, but likewise by administering the Lord's Supper and baptizing their children throughout that vast tract of land.

"These are the steps which, not of choice but necessity, I have slowly and deliberately taken. If any one is pleased to call this separating from the Church he may. But the law of England does not call it so."<sup>8</sup>

This statement is clearly to the effect that Mr. Wesley meant to extend the authority and the privileges of the commission given his original missionaries to America to include all the functions of an ordained ministry; but that he did not intend to dissolve the relations with the Church of England. That understanding of the mind of Mr. Wesley is evidently reflected in the refusal of Asbury to accept ordination as Mr. Wesley's appointee. Any student of Asbury's course must feel that he meant to effect the complete elimination of Mr. Wesley from the control of American Methodism, and that this flat refusal to receive the appointment solely upon his designation was the first stage in the battle for the independence of the Church. Asbury wrote Joseph Benson that he was opposed to the binding minute, declaring obedience to Mr. Wesley "in all matters relative to Church government," which was adopted by the Christmas Conference. There is no evidence to show that the calling of a Conference was contemplated by Mr. Wesley and the probability is that he would *not* have approved it. While there was no specific limitation in the instruction given, in his correspondence with Bishop White of the Protestant Episcopal Church, under date of April 24, 1791, Dr. Coke admits: "I am not sure but that I went farther in the separation of our Church in

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8 *Centennial History of American Methodism*, Atkinson, pp. 53, 54.

America than Mr. Wesley, from whom I received my commission, did intend. He did, indeed, solemnly invest me, so far as he had a right so to do, with Episcopal authority, but he did not intend, I think, that our entire separation should take place."<sup>9</sup> Asbury who was strenuously opposed to government from a distance of three thousand miles was not to be misled by the appointive right of Mr. Wesley. The hour for action had come in the fortunes of the American societies, and he did not propose to surrender the opportunity and implication of the victory of American arms.

Dr. Coke said that when Asbury met him at Barrett's Chapel, on Sunday, November 14, 1784, he was accompanied by a council of preachers of the American connection, to whom he requested that Mr. Wesley's communication might be submitted. This request was acceded to, and, after debate, they were unanimously of opinion that it would be best immediately to call a Conference of all the traveling preachers on the continent.<sup>10</sup> Dr. Coke knew that the man who had held the Methodists steady amidst the distractions of war and who, following the ordinations in Virginia, had conquered the spirit of ecclesiastical revolution by the authority of his own personality, was not to be set aside by a stroke of the pen, even though it be that of Mr. Wesley. He realized, too, that the failure of his mission would very probably result in making permanent the irregular move which had been temporarily suspended. Francis Asbury outgeneraled the ambassador of Mr. Wesley; for Dr. Coke would not risk bringing disaster to the Methodist cause. The only detail upon which he refused to surrender was indicated by the minute declaring allegiance to Mr. Wesley, and that

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>10</sup> *Arminian Magazine* (Amer.), 1789, pp. 243, 244, (Extracts Dr. Coke's Journals, p. 16.)

was rescinded by the Conference of 1787—apparently for the very reason which Asbury had foreseen.

As soon as it was agreed to call a Conference, Free-born Garrettson was dispatched to Virginia and the south to summon the preachers to meet in Baltimore, December 24, 1784. Asbury arranged a preaching tour of a thousand miles for Dr. Coke, who was accompanied by Black Harry; and he took Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey with himself on a tour through Maryland. On December 18, Asbury and the envoys of Mr. Wesley arrived at Perry Hall, the home of Harry Dorsey Gough, where they discussed at length the details of the momentous occasion in prospect. On the morning of December 24, they rode to Baltimore where the Conference was opened at 10:00 o'clock in Lovely Lane Chapel. The benches were without backs, there was no heat in the building, and the weather was cold; but "friends in Baltimore," says Dr. Coke, "were so kind as to put up a large stove and to back several of the seats." Here sixty of the eighty-four American preachers assembled for ten days and deliberated upon the communication of Mr. Wesley. Here they worked out the details of an organization that was soon to become one of the largest and most militant ecclesiastical bodies in America.

Unfortunately no official minutes of the proceedings were kept; and the individual recordings were naturally colored by personal opinion and are sometimes conflicting. The journals of Coke and Asbury give the most detailed records of what was done; but these must often be supplemented from the journals, diaries, and reminiscences of others who were present. Thomas Haskin, whose manuscript journal is now in the Library of Congress, records objections to the plan, and expresses his own fears as to the wisdom of setting up an independent church at that time. But, in

assigning value to his opinions, it should be kept in mind that he had been received into full connection just six months before the organization of the Church; that he located and went into business in 1786; and that in 1800 he withdrew from St. George's Church, Philadelphia, and joined with some independent Methodists who established Union Church and secured for their meeting place the south end of Whitefield Academy. The names of twenty-nine preachers who were in attendance have been determined with reasonable certainty, and others living in the vicinity of Baltimore are *presumed* to have been present.<sup>11</sup>

Asbury was ordained a deacon on Saturday, December 25, and an elder on the following day, by Dr. Coke, assisted by Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey; and on Monday, the twenty-seventh, he was ordained a superintendent by the same elders, assisted by Philip W. Otterbein, a minister of the German Reformed Church in Baltimore.<sup>12</sup> Otterbein, who was a friend of Asbury, was Arminian in theology and was fervently evangelistic in his ministry; and in 1800 he joined with Martin Boehm, a preacher among the Mennonites, in the organization of the United Brethren in Christ Church. On the last day of December, several deacons were ordained; New Year's Day was given over to the consideration of Cokesbury College; and on Sunday, January 2, Freeborn Garrettson, James O. Cromwell, Jeremiah Lambert, William Gill, Le Roy Cole, Nelson Reed, John Hagerty, Reuben Ellis, Richard Ivey and James O'Kelly were ordained elders, having been ordained deacons two days earlier. John Tunnell, Henry Willis and Beverly Allen were elected elders, but not being present they were ordained later. John Dickins was ordained a deacon, and Caleb Boyer and Ignatius

<sup>11</sup> See *Centennial History of American Methodism*, Atkinson, pp. 35-50.

<sup>12</sup> *Asbury's Journal*, Vol. I., pp. 486, 487.



Pigman were elected deacons and ordained later.<sup>13</sup> The Conference adjourned on January 2, 1785.

In addition to the setting up of its ministry, the Christmas Conference approved the Articles of Religion—Mr. Wesley's abridgement of the thirty-nine articles of the English Church; and arranged a form of Discipline for the government of the Church. This Discipline was in the form of "Conversations," questions and answers, and was really an adjustment of the Large Minutes of the Wesleyan Conference to meet American conditions—it even retained the form of its title. The Conference adopted a stringent regulation on the subject of slavery, which caused great excitement and opposition throughout the connection. The regulation was vigorously opposed; the preachers were even threatened; and at the Baltimore Conference, June 1, 1785, was entered: "It is recommended to all our brethren to suspend the execution of the minute on slavery till the deliberations of a future Conference; and that an equal space of time be allowed all our members for consideration, when the minute shall be put in force."<sup>14</sup> The regulation was never revived, but in spirit it was never repealed.

After the adoption of the name, The Methodist Episcopal Church, the matter of first importance to the Conference was the establishment of a ministry for the new Church. It was certainly the first interest with those rugged pioneers who had battled so long against moral and spiritual conditions made more difficult by their own lack of full ministerial authority. They had a commission to preach the gospel to the people; but were denied the privilege of administering the sacraments of the Church. Asbury says: "It was agreed to form ourselves into an Episcopal Church, and

<sup>13</sup> *History of the Rise of Methodism in America*, Lednum, pp. 312, 413.

<sup>14</sup> *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences*, p. 55.

to have superintendents, elders and deacons."<sup>15</sup> They planned that henceforth the Methodist Church should be able to offer every ecclesiastical right and privilege of the Christian Church without waiting for the consent or willingness of any one. The ordinations of Mr. Wesley were, therefore, but a step in the march of events which culminated in the complete independence of the Methodists.

The study of the origin and the ecclesiastical regularity of our episcopacy belongs, of course, to the polemical literature of the Church; but there are certain facts with which the historian must deal because they have bearing upon the development and progress of the movement. In demanding the submission of Mr. Wesley's plan to the Conference for ratification, Asbury achieved the independence of the American Methodist Church; but he probably exalted the authority of the Conference to a degree which he did not intend and which he certainly did not accept. His episcopal course was unquestionably founded upon a belief in the absolutism of his power. In 1801 he recorded his opinion thus: "There is not—nor indeed, in my mind, can there be—a perfect equality between a constant president, and those over whom he always presides."<sup>16</sup> This comment was provoked by a theological treatise on the origin and powers of the primitive episcopacy. Whatcoat, who belonged to the same school of thought, is quoted as believing that "it is not an office taken at pleasure, but an order of God."<sup>17</sup> Jesse Lee and John Dickins held more liberal views of the tenure and powers of the episcopacy. So, at the very beginning, we find Esau and Jacob struggling in the womb of their Methodist mother.

<sup>15</sup> *Asbury's Journal*, Vol. I., p. 486.

<sup>16</sup> *Asbury's Journal*, Vol. III., p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> *Memoirs of Whatcoat*, Phoebus, Quoted in *Centennial History of American Methodism*, p. 97

Many things might be said of the men who, as bishops, were charged with the leadership and direction of the new Church. No two men were ever more unlike, or together served more effectively in an important epoch of Methodist history. It is probably true that no ecclesiastical body was ever more fortunate in the character and ability of its initial leadership; but this is not the place for formal biography, and we can only give a brief appreciation of the two leaders whom we recognize as occupying a unique place in our history.

Doctor Thomas Coke, the appointee and the ambassador of Mr. Wesley, was of course accepted by the Conference in the relation for which he had been named and consecrated. He is, therefore, the dean of the bishops of the Methodist Church and is so listed on its episcopal roll. He was an only child and was born in Brecon, Wales, September 9, 1747. His father, who was a wealthy surgeon, provided the best educational opportunity to be had; and Dr. Coke was, therefore, one of the most accomplished men of the entire Wesleyan connection. In his seventeenth year, he became a gentleman commoner of Jesus College, Oxford; and he received the Bachelor of Arts Degree, February 4, 1768, Master of Arts, June 13, 1770, and Doctor of Civil Laws, June 17, 1775. He was ordained a deacon in the Church of England, June 10, 1770, a priest, August 23, 1772, and some time afterward he became curate at South Petherton, where his vigorous preaching on the great themes of Scripture soon attracted wide attention. It was here that he came in contact with Thomas Maxfield and the tone of his preaching was perceptibly changed. His reflection of Methodist passion and fervor brought persecution and ultimately expulsion from his curacy. He was chimed out of the pulpit by the ringing of the bells of the parish Church. He was humiliated and was much

depressed, but fortunately he found asylum with a family of Dissenters named Edmonds whose social prestige and fine loyalty did much to recover his broken spirit.

On August 18, 1776, Dr. Coke traveled a distance of twenty miles and had an interview with Mr. Wesley at Kingston; and on August 19, 1777, we find him enlisted with the Wesleyans, but for some reason his name does not appear in the Minutes until 1778. Dr. Coke's contribution to Methodism has never been estimated at its true worth; for he probably gave greater and more constructive service to the cause than any other man of that period. He was a great student, a worthy author, and more than once he was the agent of his Church in delicate and exacting crises, and he met with manliness and fidelity every obligation incurred. To him more than to any other was due credit for the Deed of Declaration which secured a succession to the Wesleyan chapels. He was probably the only man, not excepting Mr. Wesley or the saintly Fletcher, who could have steered the plan for American Methodism to a successful conclusion. As an Englishman, he faced the most delicate situation imaginable and, yet, he measured up to every exaction and detail of the national and religious emergency produced by the war. He was not perfect; and he lacked some elements of adaptation for the work of a bishop in America; and he made some surprising blunders; but his greatness was nowhere more conspicuously demonstrated than under humiliation and gross mistreatment. One is rather surprised to find that his monument in the Coke Methodist Church, Brecon, Wales, makes no mention whatever of his connection with American Methodism; but it does pay high tribute to his missionary labors, particularly the effort for the spiritual emancipation of the Negro race. It was as the father and promoter



of Methodist missions that he truly towers among men. His interest and consecrated zeal were responsible for the missions launched at the Christmas Conference; he founded Wesleyan missions in the West Indies; he placed himself and his material fortune on the missionary altar; and there is no more inspiring and heroic figure in the missionary record of the Christian Church than Dr. Coke, in his sixty-seventh year, on the high seas at the head of a band of missionaries bound for India. Six ships of his merchant convoy were lost, the wife of one of his missionary associates sickened and died, and on the morning of May 13, 1814, they found his lifeless body on the floor of his cabin—unattended he had met the angels. His body was lent to the waves that sweep the shores of the land of his last missionary dream; there it will rest until the day when the seas shall give up their dead; but his unconquerable spirit abides in missionary power and inspiration. His fame was no accident, and he earned the right to be enrolled as the premier of missionary bishops.

Francis Asbury, plebeian born and a rugged apostle of the wilderness, whose education was had in the school of experience, was the very antithesis of the scholarly and the aristocratic Dr. Coke. After the loss of a sister who died in infancy, he was, like Dr. Coke, an only child; but without dower of fortune or access to the culture which might have heightened his triumph. His father was an English gardener who was industrious and honest, but poor. Francis Asbury was born at Handsworth near Birmingham, England, August 20 or 21, 1745, and he served six years as a harness maker's apprentice. At the age of thirteen he was converted; in a little while he began to hold religious services and then to preach; and he was admitted on trial in the traveling connection at the Conference in London in 1767. After two years spent on

English circuits, he volunteered for America, and on the twenty-seventh of October, 1771 he landed at Philadelphia where he immediately began a type and a term of service destined to make him immortal.

There was no semblance of brilliance about anything that Asbury did. Indeed, he does not appear to have possessed any scintillating gift. He was simply an untiring and conscientious worker at the one task to which he gave himself. His title to fame can not be defined in the terms of any philosophy of life, nor even to a well-reasoned policy of action; but must be discovered in the *sum* of his achievements. When he declined to be consecrated to the office of a superintendent, except he be elected by the preachers, he was true to the political philosophy of the Revolution—government rests upon the consent of the governed. It was, therefore, the inflexible demand of Asbury, and not the plan and design of Mr. Wesley, that secured autonomous control for the American Methodists. He was a man of the people, not on account of any theory of social relations which he held, but by the tie of constant association. There is no intimation that he was ever considered to be a great preacher, but he was unquestionably an effective preacher. Thomas Ware said that his public prayers often created an expectation in his audience which he could not measure up to in his preaching. But his influence with such men as Judge White, Senator Bassett, and Harry Dorsey Gough indicate that he was vastly more than a mediocre man. He was not a man who, in his administration, could conceive and carry into execution an elaborate and far-reaching program; but his progress was through a process of trial and error. Within the limits of his field, however, he was very effective. His mind was not of a speculative type; he never surrendered to sentiment or emotion; but he recognized his own

limitations and kept steadfastly on his course. He traveled upwards of five thousand miles a year for more than a third of a century; he was never daunted by weather, nor by roads, nor could the approach of age slow his pace. He preached his last sermon in Richmond, Virginia, on March 24, 1816—exactly one week before his death which occurred at the home of his friend George Arnold, near Fredericksburg, Virginia. The distinctive achievement of his life is the Methodist Church which is his sufficient title to distinction, and his forty years of consecrated leadership and toil is its glorious benediction. The radiant afterglow of his fame lingers upon no ivy-grown college tower; no academic honor or recognition attached to his name; and he was to the end of his life, Francis Asbury, Bishop by the suffrage of his fellow preachers, and by the consecration of himself to the task. He lived a plain man among men and he ended his days as he began—a knight of the road, an itinerant Methodist preacher whose ministry was neither changed in its emphasis, nor lessened in its toil by his ecclesiastical exaltation.

The next step in the formation of the new Church was the setting up of its ministry—licentiates, deacons, and elders. In a way, the ministry of the Church had been typed already by the work and the workmen who had developed the field. The itinerant feature of Methodism had become so prominent that the preachers were referred to as “land-strollers;” and their faithfulness in keeping engagements for services, regardless of weather, passed into the American proverb: “There is nothing out today, but crows and Methodist preachers.” The changes which the Conference made in the ministry related mainly to the functions of the group of preachers chosen for ordination. According to the Discipline, the office of a deacon is,

"To baptize in the absence of an elder, to assist the elder in the administration of the Lord's Supper, to marry, bury the dead, and read the liturgy to the people, except what relates to the administration of the Lord's Supper." The office of an elder is, "To administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and to perform all the other rites prescribed by our liturgy."<sup>18</sup>

There has been some misapprehension as to the introduction of a time limit upon the pastorate. By recommendation of the Conferences, the preachers had interchanged quarterly or every six months; but no action was taken on that subject in 1784, and the length of pastoral tenure was left unrestricted. The first enactment on the limitation of tenure was in 1792 when the term of a presiding elder was fixed at not to exceed four years for any one district.<sup>19</sup> In 1794 a note was inserted in the Minutes saying, "The bishop and conferences desire, that the preachers would generally change every six months, by the order of the presiding elder, whenever it can be made convenient."<sup>20</sup> It was not till 1804, twenty years after the establishment of the Church, that there was a law placing a limit on the pastoral term. At that time the General Conference inserted in the Discipline the words, "Provided he (the bishop) shall not allow any preacher to remain in the same station more than two years consecutively."<sup>21</sup> The limit thus became mandatory.

The larger responsibilities of an elder, now comprehended in the work of a presiding elder, were not an enactment of the Christmas Conference, but the office was *practically* instituted then. In their notes on the Discipline of 1796, Coke and Asbury say: "When Mr.

<sup>18</sup> *History of the Discipline*, Emory, p. 39.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>20</sup> *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences, 1773-1813*, p. 147.

<sup>21</sup> *History of the Discipline*, Emory, p. 126.



Wesley drew up a plan of government for our Church in America, he desired that no more elders should be ordained in the first instance than were absolutely necessary, and that the work on the continent should be divided between them, in respect to the duties of their office.”<sup>22</sup> This statement implies that the office really originated in 1784 and in deference to the wish of Mr. Wesley, that the ordinations should be limited to the necessities of the work. The presiding eldership was unofficially recognized in the Minutes of 1789, but the office was not established by law until the Conference of 1792, and its original purpose was to supply the sacraments to the people, not the administrative function of the statute.

The Bishop’s Cabinet was a still later development. Bishop Asbury never used his presiding elders as counselors in making the appointments, although he is quoted as having written a letter in which he said: “They must be my committee of safety.” In 1806 Dr. Coke criticised Asbury’s absolutism in making the appointments; and he said of his own method: “Every year I preside at the Irish Conference & the preachers are stationed by myself and a committee of nine who are the representatives of the Districts.” He said also, “I approve of the stationing of the preachers by a committee at each Annual Conference with the Bishop at the head of it.”<sup>23</sup> It appears, therefore, that credit for the origin of the Bishop’s Cabinet belongs to Dr. Coke. As is well known, Bishop McKendree stood with James O’Kelly against the absolutism of Bishop Asbury, and he is believed by some to have been the author of the statement quoted by Ezekiel Cooper in his paper on the Bishop’s Power: “It is an insult to my understanding; and such an extraordinary

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 348.

<sup>23</sup> Ms. Letter, Drew University, Reproduced in *Francis Asbury*, Duren, p. 261.

stretch of power, so tyrannical, (or) despotic, that I cannot, (or), will not submit to it."<sup>24</sup> Whether this is McKendree's statement or not, when the burden of responsibility fell upon him he declined to accept it without the counsel of the presiding elders. Asbury urged him to make the appointments without consulting the presiding elders, but in a letter written to Asbury from Cincinnati, October 8, 1811, he says: "I still refuse to take the *whole* responsibility upon myself, not that I am afraid of proper accountability, but because I conceive the proposition included one highly improper."<sup>25</sup>

The task of arranging the form of the Discipline was greatly simplified by the use of Mr. Wesley's liturgy and the Large Minutes of the Wesleyan Conference as guides. Much of the Discipline was a mere adaptation of these to meet American needs; but there were some things in which the Conference launched boldly upon an open and uncharted course. All of these things will be discussed at length at a later period in the progress of the Church; but mention of them should be made in connection with the Christmas Conference, because they show the breadth of vision of the men who were charged with the duty of guiding the destinies of the Methodist Church. They show, too, the courage and the faith of the preachers who were to do service in promoting righteousness, justice and salvation among the people of the new Republic.

The first important matter after the establishment of the ministry, was the promotion of the cause of education. Poor and undeveloped as the country was, education came in for serious and substantial consideration. Four years before the Christmas Conference, John Dickins had drawn up a plan for a Kingswood school in America, and it was that plan and subscrip-

<sup>24</sup> *Wesleyan Repository*, Vol. III., p. 303, quoted in *Centennial History of American Methodism*, Atkinson, p. 140.

<sup>25</sup> *Life and Times of William McKendree*, Paine, Vol. I., p. 260.

tion which was enlarged into Cokesbury College, at the insistence and under the promotional leadership of Dr. Coke.<sup>26</sup> Ten days before the Conference convened, Dr. Coke records that he had prevailed upon Mr. Dallam to give land for a site valued at fifty pounds currency. Later he says that he and Mr. Asbury together have secured a thousand pounds sterling, and that the sum was increased to one thousand and fifty-seven pounds and seventeen shillings, sterling, before they left the seat of the Conference. Two days after the adjournment, Dr. Coke was in Abingdon where the College was to be located, and he ordered the materials for the building. On May 30, 1785, the Bishops were again in Abingdon and they had "proper bonds drawn up" for the four acres of ground upon which the building was to stand and for which they agreed to give Mr. Dallam sixty pounds sterling. Asbury preached the sermon at the laying of the foundation, July 5, 1785; and again at the formal opening of the Institution, December 6, 1787.<sup>27</sup> The house was a three-story brick structure, measuring forty feet by one hundred and eight feet, and it has been described as being the equal of any college building in America at that day. It is true that the enterprise failed, but the conception and the effort are among the most challenging incidents in the educational history of the nation. It is amazing beyond measure that fifteen thousand pioneers, poor, scattered from New York to North Carolina, and themselves uneducated, should have enterprised and carried forward such a stupendous task. It probably goes far toward explaining the substantial progress which Methodism has made in the United States.

Another interesting feature of the Christmas Conference was the launching of a program of Christian

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<sup>26</sup> *Asbury's Journal*, Vol. I., p. 377.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 497, Vol. II, p. 22.

missions. The church was organized with about eighty-three preachers, and three of them were designated and set apart as foreign missionaries—Freeborn Garrettson and James O. Cromwell for Nova Scotia, and Jeremiah Lambert for Antigua in the West Indies. A public collection was taken at the Conference and the sum of thirty pounds sterling was raised; and, in Philadelphia and New York, Dr. Coke increased the amount to sixty-six pounds sterling, or \$325.<sup>28</sup> From Baltimore, therefore, the new church moved out under the inspiration of a great missionary impulse—an interest which has given distinction to its work and progress.

Closely akin to the missionary interest of the Methodists was the charter declaration of opposition to human slavery. Of all the amendments which the Christmas Conference made to the "Large Minutes" of the Wesleyan Conference, the most extensive and the most daring was the answer which it gave to "Question 42. What methods can we take to extirpate slavery?" The action taken did not receive unanimous consent even from the preachers, as is shown by the controversy which arose between Dr. Coke and Jesse Lee at the first Conference held after the organization of the Church. The controversy resulted in the arrest of Jesse Lee's character by Dr. Coke, but later the charges were withdrawn and Dr. Coke made apology to Lee for wounding his feelings. The membership and constituency of slaveholding sections were thoroughly aroused by the daring course championed by the Methodists; and they assumed a determined and threatening attitude toward the supporters of the new legislation. Here, as has often been the case, the spokesmen for human liberty were in advance of their

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28 *Arminian Magazine* (Amer.), 1789, p. 292. (See Extracts Dr. Coke's Journal p. 24.)



day, in the courageous solution which they offered; but it reflects credit upon the heart of the leadership of the church that it should have dared to make such a pronouncement at that time.

The Conference adjourned on January 2, and the sixty preachers, who had been in attendance, saddled their horses and set out for the various fields of labor from which they had come. They returned to their posts with an objective and an inspiration which they had not had at any time before. Freeborn Garrettson and James O. Cromwell sailed for Nova Scotia about the middle of February, and there they remained until April, 1787. Jeremiah Lambert, who had been the first missionary to be appointed west of the Alleghenies, went to Antigua, but he probably remained only a little while. At the Conference in June, John Baxter was ordained an elder and was assigned to assist Lambert in Antigua. Lambert returned to Maryland on account of failing health and died in 1786. Dr. Coke occupied himself with the educational and the missionary enterprises which he promoted at the Christmas Conference; and in the controversy over the rule on slavery which he courageously championed. He went northward from Baltimore, preached and held Conferences until June 2, when he left for his return to England.

Before the end of October, 1785, Bishop Asbury had made a complete round of the church, riding from New York to South Carolina twice. After the adjournment of the Conference, he went southward to Charleston; and then returned to Green Hill's near Louisburg, North Carolina, where the first Annual Conference in the history of the new Church was held, April 20, 1785. The Conference was attended by twenty preachers; Beverly Allen, who had been elected an elder at the Christmas Conference, was probably

ordained; and the first clash regarding the rule on slavery occurred. On May 1, the second Annual Conference was held at Mason's in Virginia; and there the rule on slavery and the petition sent to the Virginia Assembly seeking the emancipation of the slaves, caused an angry discussion. It appears that some leading laymen of Virginia were present and demanded the suspension of the rule. Asbury says that they were angry enough and some threats were made, but no bones were broken.<sup>29</sup> From Colonel Mason's the Bishops moved on to Baltimore where on June 1, the final Conference of the year was held. Le Roy Cole, an elder ordained at the Christmas Conference, was suspended; two deacons and four elders were ordained; and the rule on slavery was suspended.<sup>30</sup>

Following the organization of the church, there was a marked revival of activity at the North, where the progress of the societies had been seriously crippled by war activities. In Philadelphia, New Jersey, Delaware and New York, the work prospered again. In the latter part of February, Bishop Asbury, Jesse Lee and Henry Willis entered Charleston, South Carolina, and after a stay of about two weeks, during which services were held in an abandoned Baptist church, Henry Willis, the presiding elder, was left in charge until the Conference when John Tunnell was sent as pastor. Rev. William Hammett and others later caused some dissensions, but this marked a permanent beginning of Methodism in the city.<sup>31</sup> At Cheraw, South Carolina, during a journey with Asbury, Jesse Lee had a conversation with a young clerk who told him of religious conditions in New England, and he then resolved upon a mission to that section, for the realization of which

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<sup>29</sup> *Asbury's Journal*, Vol. I., p. 495.

<sup>30</sup> *Arminian Magazine* (Amer.), 1789, p. 397. (See Extracts Dr. Coke's Journal, p. 46.)

<sup>31</sup> *Asbury's Journal*, Vol. I., p. 491.

he had to wait four years.<sup>32</sup> The new Church had an auspicious beginning. The first quadrennium resulted in ninety-eight recruits for the ministry; more than twenty-two thousand additions to the membership; and it ended with a great revival as a climax.<sup>33</sup>

The opening year of the second quadrennium was signalized by two outstanding events: the one was auspicious and constructive, but the other proved to be unwise and disastrous. These events were the introduction of Methodism into New England, and the formation of the Council. The invasion of New England began with the assignment of Jesse Lee to Stamford circuit, at the Conference of 1789. Richard Boardman had made a tour of that section in 1771; William Black, a Wesleyan preacher, in 1784; and Cornelius Cook and Freeborn Garrettson in 1787; but no permanent success followed their efforts. Jesse Lee crossed into Connecticut with a determination to win New England for the Methodists. His first sermon was preached in Norwalk, June 17, 1789; the first society was organized at Stratfield, September 6, with three devout women for members; and the second class was formed at Redding, December 28, and consisted of one male and one female member—"Mr. Aaron Sandford, and Mrs. Hawley, his wife's mother."<sup>34</sup> Lee's Chapel, the first Methodist Church in New England, was built in Weston, now Easton, Connecticut, in 1790. On February 27, 1790, Jacob Brush, George Roberts and Daniel Smith arrived at Dan Town where they met Lee—they were his first reinforcements. Jesse Lee entered Boston, July 9, 1790, but he was not able to organize a society there until January 13, 1792, and the cornerstone of the first church was laid on August 28, 1795. From Boston and Lynn, he passed on into Maine where he formed the

<sup>32</sup> *Memoir of the Rev. Jesse Lee*, Thrift, p. 73.

<sup>33</sup> *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences, 1773-1813*, pp. 60-75.

<sup>34</sup> *Memorials of the Introduction of Methodism*, Stevens, pp. 242, 244.

first society at Monmouth, "about the first of November, 1794;" and the first meeting-house was erected in Readfield in December of the same year. After eight years of labor, Jesse Lee left New England, and the work had grown from Stamford circuit and a lone missionary to twenty-two circuits, thirty-four preachers, and three thousand nine hundred and thirty-nine members. It is doubtful if, all things considered, there can be found a more impressive record, or an instance of a fame more justly earned than that of Jesse Lee, the first missionary to New England.

The widespread opposition to the regulation respecting slavery, especially to Dr. Coke's strong and uncompromising advocacy of the rule, was the occasion for the first rift in the good feeling of the church. There seems to be no reason for questioning the sincerity of Dr. Coke; but he failed to appreciate what had been the effect of American independence upon the thought and feeling of the people, particularly toward what might seem to be English dictation. His superior position in the church and his educational qualification made it easy and natural for him to be charged with being "overbearing." While he was in England in 1787, he made some arbitrary changes in the times and places for holding the Conferences, which rather irritated the preachers. No assignment of reason for those changes appears in the official records of the church; but Nathaniel Bangs says they were made at the request of Mr. Wesley; and it is at least possible that they were made in furtherance of the plan to have Richard Whatcoat elevated to the Superintendency of the Methodist Church. At any rate, the Conference of that year took action which humiliated every person involved in that plan. The appointment of Whatcoat was refused; the action of the Christmas Conference declaring loyalty to Mr. Wesley was rescinded, and his name was left



off the Minutes; and Dr. Coke was rebuked by the Conference for assuming to rearrange the schedule of the Conferences, and he was required to sign an agreement which practically divested him of all authority as a bishop of the Methodist Church.

A fundamental fact of Methodist polity is its connectionalism. But, in the haste of the Christmas Conference, no adequate provision was made for the direction of its course, the control of its activities, or to meet the complications of its growing work. Through this lack of constitutionally established machinery, the bishops and leaders of the church were soon brought face to face with the problem of devising some plan for regulating the affairs of the connection. If it were to be connectional, some authoritative agency of control must be established. Accordingly, the Bishops submitted to the Conferences of 1789, a plan for the Council which was intended to supply that need. Dr. Coke, who was present at the Conferences, did not favor the plan for the Council. According to the resolution adopted by the Conferences, the reason assigned for this extraordinary measure was the impracticability of calling a General Conference. Its membership was to be composed of the bishops, the presiding elders or their alternates, providing that fewer than nine members should not constitute a quorum, and that in the absence of a quorum elders should be appointed to complete it. The powers were defined thus: "These shall have authority to mature everything they shall judge expedient. 1. To preserve the general union. 2. To render and preserve the external form of worship similar in all our societies through the continent: 3. To preserve the essentials of Methodist doctrines and discipline pure and uncorrupted: 4. To correct all abuses and disorders: and, lastly, they are authorized to mature everything they may see necessary for the good of

the church, and for the promoting and improving our colleges and plan of education." The plan provided that the first Council should be held at Cokesbury, December 1, 1789, and should be summoned thereafter at such times and places as the bishops should judge expedient; and any action proposed must receive the unanimous consent of the body itself, and should not be binding in any district until agreed to by a majority of the Conference which is held for that district.<sup>35</sup>

The objection raised against the plan was that it placed too much power in the hands of the bishop and the presiding elders who were his appointees. But the organization was so completely handicapped by its own constitution as to make it impossible. The first Council met at Cokesbury College, Thursday, December 3, 1789. Those present were: Bishop Asbury; Reuben Ellis; Edward Morris; Philip Bruce; James O'Kelly; Lemuel Green; Nelson Reed; Joseph Everett, alternate for Richard Whatcoat; John Dickins, alternate for Henry Willis; James O. Cromwell and Freeborn Garrettson. Dr. Coke was in England and only one presiding elder was absent and unrepresented—John Tunnell who was dying with consumption. The session sat for six days; adopted some resolutions relating to union, and for the raising of a fund to care for the poor preachers on the frontiers; and Asbury raised twenty-eight pounds for suffering preachers in the West.<sup>36</sup>

Within the Council, there seems to have been complete satisfaction and unity of sentiment regarding the plan. The only voice raised against it came from far-away New England, and was that of Jesse Lee. Even James O'Kelly signed the reply which rather threatened Lee for his "objections to the very fundamentals of Methodism."<sup>37</sup> Some his-

<sup>35</sup> *History of the M. E. Church*, Bangs, Vol. I., p. 303.

<sup>36</sup> *Asbury's Journal*, Vol. II., p. 66.

<sup>37</sup> *History of the Methodists*, Lee, pp. 158, 159

torians are inclined to give O'Kelly credit for the assembling of the first General Conference; but it was Lee who made the first protest against the Council, and who urged also the calling of a General Conference; and it was the insistence of Dr. Coke which finally achieved it.<sup>38</sup> Immediately following adjournment of the Council, O'Kelly developed a violent antipathy toward it, and he became its most vigorous antagonist; but in this he completely reversed his form.

During the year which followed the first session of the Council, it was the subject of much adverse criticism, both in the Conferences and in private conversation. Within a month after its adjournment, Asbury received a threatening letter from James O'Kelly. At the Conference held in Charleston, South Carolina, February 15, it was debated and the body took action to limit its pronouncements on canon changes to mere "advice." Asbury says that the Virginia Conference, under the influence of the presiding elders, "turned it out of doors." Notwithstanding the opposition, the second Council met at the home of Philip Rogers in Baltimore, December 1, 1790; but this time only ten of the twenty presiding elders responded to the call. The Council decided that it had full authority to manage the temporal concerns of the church; and it advised a loan of one thousand pounds, payable in two years, for Cokesbury College; but declined to send out any recommendations. The session lasted nine days.<sup>39</sup>

A third meeting was appointed for Baltimore, December 1, 1792. But the resistance of Jesse Lee, the agitations of James O'Kelly, and the opposition of Dr. Coke were too great to be overcome. Asbury showed a determination to perpetuate his creature, and the relation between himself and Dr. Coke, on account of the

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<sup>38</sup> *Life and Times of the Rev. Jesse Lee*, Lee, p. 270.

<sup>39</sup> *Asbury's Journal*, Vol. II., pp. 69, 73, 87, 101, 102.

Council, became quite strained—they even chose to be entertained at separate places during the Conference at Petersburg, Virginia, April 20, 1791. At that Conference, the preachers and people were much exercised over it, and Asbury's entry is: "The affair of the Council was suspended until a General Conference."<sup>40</sup> Thus the Council, as an institution for the control of the Methodist Church, died. Nathan Bangs described it as an ephemeral institution, and so it was in years; but its baleful influence as a cause of dissension and strife continued through two decades. James O'Kelly made violent attacks upon the autocracy and even the integrity of Asbury; but the portrait which he drew of himself on the canvas of Methodist history is that of inordinate ambition and unrealized aspirations.

Asbury, as was his habit, recited but few details of the controversy, and Dr. Coke may have over-estimated the opposition; but there can be no doubt that things had reached a serious crisis in the affairs of the church. Dr. Coke wrote, concerning this period, to the General Conference of 1808: "I had, indeed, with great labor and fatigue, . . . prevailed on James O'Kelly and the thirty-six traveling preachers who had withdrawn with him from all connection with Bishop Asbury, to submit to the decision of a General Conference." One can scarcely refuse to believe that this statement represented the true situation; for it was written to the very preachers who were involved, one of them William McKendree; and it is borne out by the course of events following the first General Conference. In the letter just referred to, Dr. Coke says that at the first General Conference: "I proposed and obtained that great blessing to the American connection, a permanency for General Conferences, which were to be held at

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.



stated times.”<sup>41</sup> Asbury’s Journal indicates that he was never in worse mood than at this time; and Dr. Coke was evidently much concerned for the future of the church. Two days after the adjournment of the Virginia Conference, at which it was agreed to suspend the Council, Dr. Coke was in Richmond, and it was there that he wrote the ill-advised confidential letter to Bishop White of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in Pennsylvania, in which he proposed the uniting of the Methodist Church with the Episcopal Church.<sup>42</sup>

It may be admitted that the correspondence with Bishop White was a piece of tactless presumption and unwisdom upon the part of Dr. Coke; but it is in exact harmony with a similar correspondence which he had with the Bishop of London, March 29, 1799, in which he proposed the reuniting of the Methodists of England with the Church of England.<sup>43</sup> Dr. Coke was always attached to the Established Church; but his own interpretation of the correspondence with Bishop White is: “I did verily believe then, that, under God, the connection would be more likely to be saved from convulsions by a union with the old Episcopal Church, than by any other way.”<sup>44</sup> The negotiation with Bishop White was not known to the Church until nearly twenty years afterward, and then it came out as an attack upon Dr. Coke. Such was the situation which the Methodists of America faced as they approached the first General Conference in 1792.

This brings us through the organization period of the church, and to the beginning of an era of strife which marked the years to follow. The ecclesiastical sky of the church was already overcast; but the organization and its leadership were fairly well estab-

<sup>41</sup> *History of the M. E. Church*, Bangs, Vol. II., pp. 206-210.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 200-204.

<sup>43</sup> *Life of the Rev. Thomas Coke*, Drew, pp. 288-291.

<sup>44</sup> *History of the M. E. Church*, Bangs, Vol. II., p. 207.

lished in the confidence and esteem of the people despite the hue and cry raised against Asbury and the Council. The Church that began as an organized revival in 1784, had witnessed a wide extension of its geographical boundaries; and the eight years of its existence had netted a gain in the membership of more than fifty thousand—three and one-third times the original foundation of fifteen thousand with which it began.

## CHAPTER IV

### ADJUSTMENT AND POLICY

THE Wesleyan movement, as we have seen, originated within the Church of England, and it was developed without denominational appeal or purpose. In its inception it was an evangelistic enterprise undertaken by Mr. Wesley, on behalf of the poor and the unchurched folk who were not included in the program of the existing churches. Following the quickening of his own spirit, his soul yearned for the salvation of the religiously destitute people of London; and the movement soon grew into a concerted enterprise which covered the whole of the British Isles. The movement in America came into being through the labor of uncommissioned and unrelated individuals; but it was simply a transfer of the aims and methods of the Wesleyan Revival. In 1773 the American societies voluntarily placed themselves under the direction of Mr. Wesley, and they formed a part of the Wesleyan movement until the outbreak of the Revolution made the continuance of that relation untenable. When it became necessary for Mr. Wesley to set up an independent ministry for the American Methodists, he made it plain that he desired no more ordinations than were absolutely necessary to meet the emergency which had arisen on account of the war. One may venture the assertion, therefore, that from 1739 to 1784, a period of forty-five years, no great body of Christians was ever more nearly without a denominational tie, or was more dependent upon a spiritual bond for its unity.

It was manifestly the wish of the Methodists to

maintain the spiritual ideal with which they began, and to escape as far as possible entanglements which might militate against their evangelistic effectiveness. But no sooner was an organization effected than they found themselves forced into a defensive position. Every instance of opposition, the larger sense of social responsibility, and the new incentive to spiritual adventure—all conspired to establish a denominational consciousness, and to give the new church a direction which its very independence made inevitable. The preachers left the Christmas Conference with a sectarian feeling which had not been possible before; and the desire for ecclesiastical independence, which brought affairs to the crisis of 1784, was naturally reflected in the progress of the church. The attacks which had been largely directed against persons and methods became attacks upon the church. A few days before the opening of the Christmas Conference, Dr. Coke was in Cambridge, Maryland, and he says: "In this town, which has been remarkable above any other for persecution, there arose a great dispute whether I should preach in the house or not. The ladies in general were for it, but the gentlemen against it, and the gentlemen prevailed. Accordingly the church door was locked, though they have had no service in it, I think, for several years; and it has frequently been left open, I am informed, for cows, and dogs, and pigs. However, I read prayers and preached at the door of a cottage, to one of the largest congregations I have had in America."<sup>1</sup> Such affronts would necessarily accentuate the denominational feeling of the Methodists and would array them against all exhibitions of bigotry and conceit.

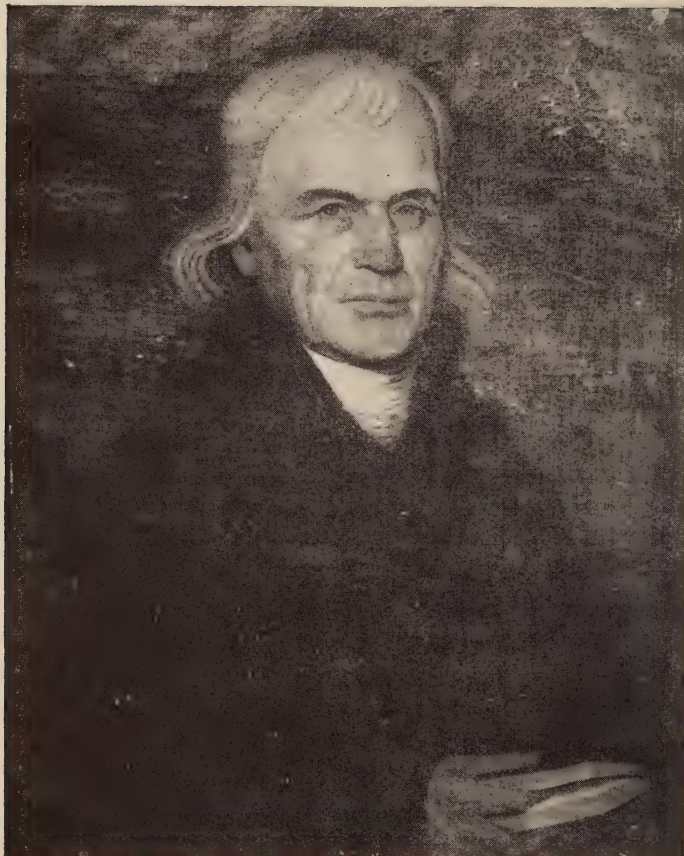
Another factor which contributed to this trend of feeling was furnished by the more definite social re-

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<sup>1</sup> *Extracts of the Journals of Dr. Coke's Five Visits to America*, p. 19.







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FRANCIS ASBURY

This portrait was painted by an unknown artist. Tradition says that it was made for a society of Methodist women, and when the society disbanded the portrait was presented to Rev. Stephen Asbury Roszel. It remained in his family until after the Civil War; and it was then presented to Judge Richard H. Tebbs, of Leesburg, Virginia, by George Roszel. From Judge Tebbs, it descended to the late Hon. Charles B. Tebbs, of Washington, D. C. Permission for its use in this work was generously granted by Mrs. Chas. B. Tebbs and Mr. William F. Tebbs of Houston, Texas, two of the owners of the portrait.

sponsibility of the organized church. This was brought forward at once by the struggle which arose over slavery. In this connection, the minds of the people turned to means for making their social ideals more effective. In Dr. Coke's *American Journal*, we find: "Many of our friends and some of the great men of the States, have been inciting us to apply for Acts of Incorporation, but I have discouraged it, and have prevailed. We have a better staff to lean upon, than this world can afford."<sup>2</sup> This probably means that there were those who felt that a measure of legal establishment would advantage the Methodist cause, but Dr. Coke wished to avoid such entanglement. This same social issue led the bishops to make a personal appeal to General Washington at Mount Vernon; to interview the Governor of North Carolina; and to formulate petitions to be presented to the legislatures of both North Carolina and Virginia. Dr. Coke gives the name of Mr. Finney who was one of the committee to form the petition in Virginia; and he says that it was to be presented in the House of Delegates by Harry Fry, a member from Culpepper County.<sup>3</sup> The feeling of social responsibility inspired the address, also, which the Conference of 1789 directed the bishops to convey to President Washington and the new Government.

The almost passionate devotion of the people to the democratic philosophy of the new Nation made them sensitive even to an appearance of encroachment upon their liberties, or to the least intimation of autocracy. This sensitiveness came out in connection with an incident at the time of Mr. Wesley's death. Dr. Coke's devotion to Mr. Wesley was shown in many ways; but particularly in the tenderness and exquisite grace of the dedication of his *American Journal*: "Honoured and very dear Sir, PERMIT me to lay at your feet the

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 43.

first publication of any magnitude that I have ventured to the public eye. In you I have for thirteen years found a Father and a Friend, and I feel a peculiar happiness on every opportunity afforded me of expressing my obligation to you.

"I know that you hate Flattery, and therefore I must avoid all panegyric. To say but little of you, would derogate from your due; and to do you justice would offend you. I must therefore only subscribe myself, with great respect, Dear Sir, Your Dutiful, Affectionate, and Most Obligated Son, THOMAS COKE."

When Dr. Coke was shown the account of Mr. Wesley's death, as published in a Philadelphia paper, he entered in his journal: "I evidently saw by the account, that it was too true that I had lost my friend, and that the world had lost a burning and a shining light."<sup>4</sup> But when Dr. Coke preached in Baltimore and charged the American Methodists with "an almost diabolical act" in leaving Mr. Wesley's name off the Minutes in 1787, and with thereby hastening his death, the statement aroused church-wide resentment. It is true that they were such strong words as might not have been used under ordinary circumstances; but the Methodists made no allowance whatever for the sincerity of his sorrow, nor for his personal attachment to his friend. These facts show how quickly the church had acquired a pronounced denominational feeling.

The Christmas Conference failed to anticipate the rapid development of the denominational life of the church; and entirely too much was left to the determination of its leaders and to the benevolent-mindedness of the preachers and people. Within a short time, therefore, the church found itself in the grip of internal troubles which soon reached a critical stage. The slow and cumbersome process of submitting every mat-

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Dedication and p. 154.



ter to the Annual Conference for adjudication led to the formation of the Council which failed. The first General Conference assembled under circumstances which caused it to be a distinct reaction against the Council and the bishops—particularly Bishop Asbury. The outlook for the meeting was made all the more ominous because agitation had reached a stage of malignancy and bitterness which might easily bring about a reactionary and a ruinous course for the church. Asbury was apparently in no mood for supplying the leadership which the situation demanded, and he was the chief object of attack besides. Dr. Coke was expected, but he had not arrived and no word had been heard from him. So, at that critical moment, the prospect for the church could scarcely have been less reassuring. We learn from Dr. Coke's journal that he arrived at the home of Philip Rogers in Baltimore, about nine o'clock on the evening before the opening of the Conference, where he found Asbury and some of the preachers. Then follows one of the most striking instances of innocent and unintentional humor to be found in the literature of the church: "They had almost given me up, but intended to spend ten days in debating matters of smallest importance, in prayer, and in declaring their experiences, before they entered on the weightier business, if I did not sooner arrive."<sup>5</sup>

The First General Conference assembled in Baltimore, on the morning of November 1, 1792. Unfortunately no official record of its proceedings was preserved and we are wholly dependent upon rather sketchy unofficial records—the journals and diaries of those who were in attendance, and upon Jesse Lee's *History of the Methodists*. Rev. William Colbert, who was a delegate, says that the rules of order were accepted with very little debate on the first day; but

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

the tremendous importance of that action is not even hinted at in his placid statement. The masterful strategy of that entire Conference was stamped upon the rules of order, and the final results were largely assured. One of the rules was, "It shall require two-thirds of all the members of the conference to make a new rule, or to abolish an old one; but a majority may alter or amend any rule."<sup>6</sup> Our Methodist forefathers may have been remarkable for piety; but they were certainly not unacquainted with shrewdness and worldly wisdom; and there is in all probability no more remarkable exhibition of foresight and generalship in the history of any church than that exhibited in the organization of the first General Conference of American Methodism.

The one real issue of the Conference was the "Appeal" measure which was introduced by James O'Kelly on Friday morning, the second day of the Conference. It provided that: "After the bishop appoints the preachers at the Conference to their several circuits, if any one think himself injured by the appointment, he shall have liberty to appeal to the Conference and state his objections; and if the Conference approve his objections, the bishop shall appoint him to another circuit."<sup>7</sup> William Colbert says that the Appeal was defended by James O'Kelly, Richard Ivey, Hope Hull, Freeborn Garrettson, and Richard Swift; and that it was opposed by Nelson Reed, Henry Willis, Thomas Morrell, Joseph Everett and others. It was debated for three full days and when the vote was taken the Appeal was defeated by a large majority. During the remaining ten days of the Conference, the time was occupied with revisions and explanations of the Discipline. There were more modifications of existing laws than were made at any Conference for fifty years fol-

<sup>6</sup> *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, Bangs, Vol. I., pp. 343, 344.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 344.

lowing; but the two-thirds rule reduced new legislation and repeal of old laws to a minimum. Dr. Coke says that it was determined to hold another General Conference at Baltimore, November 1, 1796, the membership to be made up of every traveling preacher in full connection. In the meantime the Districts were to hold Annual Conferences. The Conference of 1792 enacted a law creating the presiding eldership and fixed his term for any one District at not exceeding four years. The preachers were required to make an accounting of all marriage fees received before they might receive anything on salary deficiency; and they were forbidden to accept presents for baptisms and burials.

So far as the mere record shows, the Conference of 1792 was a great victory for Asbury; but those who were informed knew that breakers were ahead. The morning after the vote on the Appeal measure, James O'Kelly and some of his supporters addressed a letter to the Conference in which they said they could no longer retain their seats in the body. The Conference appointed a committee to confer with them, and Dr. Coke had a personal interview with O'Kelly; but they refused to be conciliated and left for home. Following the withdrawal of O'Kelly, the Conference enacted a measure for dealing with those who might sow discord and dissension in the ranks; but the church sincerely desired to avoid a rupture. At the Virginia Conference in November, "Bishop Asbury introduced the case of Mr. O'Kelly, and it was resolved, in consideration of his age and services, to allow him his annual salary of 40 pounds, as when he traveled in the connection, provided he was peaceable and forebore to excite divisions among the brethren."<sup>8</sup>

After a little while, O'Kelly declined to accept his

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<sup>8</sup> *Life and Times of Jesse Lee*, Lee, p. 274; *Asbury's Journal*, Vol. II. p. 174.

salary, and in 1793 he organized an independent church which he first called the Republican Methodist Church, but in 1801 he rechristened it the Christian Connection. The preachers refused to follow him into a new enterprise which proposed chiefly an administrative distinction from the church to which they already belonged. Nevertheless this proved to be the most disastrous schism of early Methodist history. The Minutes of 1793 show only a small decrease in the white membership, but it appears that some of the charges did not report and the figures of the preceding year were entered in the record for that year also. This was true of Mecklenburg, Amelia, and Banks circuits, all of which had been in James O'Kelly's District in Virginia. The losses continued from year to year until 1796 when they reached a total of more than ten thousand—in a single quadrennium, the church had lost one out of every six of its membership. In the quadrennium preceding the O'Kelly trouble, in spite of the agitation, 177 preachers were admitted on trial, 3 withdrew and 32 located. But from 1792 to 1796, 161 preachers were admitted on trial, eleven withdrew and 106 located; and the next quadrennium even a smaller number were admitted on trial. These figures give some idea as to the extent of the disturbance, but they were not produced by the O'Kelly troubles alone.

The O'Kelly struggle arose at a time which was well suited for the promotion of a revolutionary movement in the church; for there was a manifest loss of the fervor and enthusiasm which had characterized the early days. It followed a long period of agitation against the leadership of the church, because of the Council and because of the autocracy of Bishop Asbury. The seriousness of the disorder is told in a letter written by Rev. Devereaux Jarratt. When the spirit of division was at its height in 1794, he wrote: "O'Kelly



does great things in the devisive way and I dare say he will make *Asbury's Mitre* set very uneasy on his head. . . . The divisions and animosities now subsisting are greater, perhaps, than you can conceive, and yet all these may be but the beginnings of sorrow.”<sup>9</sup> Jarratt’s unfriendly feeling toward the Methodists is unmistakable in this letter; but there can be no doubt that the party spirit was rife and that the situation among the Methodists was lamentable indeed.

After 1796, small gains were recorded, but the membership losses were not fully regained until 1801, when the great revival beginning at the end of the century was at its height. It is not necessary to deny the bitterness of O’Kelly, nor the feeling of the church against him—such are the certain and lamentable results of ecclesiastical controversy, which only time and the grace of God can heal. James O’Kelly was in his prime and he was no ordinary man, as may be judged from the course of events following his withdrawal from the Methodist Church. Although he was deserted by practically all of those who shared his opinions on church administration, he brought about the greatest upheaval of the early years, and he maintained an unequal contest for an amazingly long period of time. He was a good fighter, but he was a bad loser. He lived until 1826—thirty-four years after he withdrew from the Methodist Church; he saw practically all the members of the first General Conference in their graves; and, although outside the church, he made a mark upon its progress which no historian can overlook or fail to record.

More than a hundred years have passed since the death of James O’Kelly, but they have not relieved his career of pathos. He was a man conspicuous for brilliance and real ability, but he failed to keep his abilities

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<sup>9</sup> Autobiography Rev. Devereaux Jarratt, Thoughts, etc., pp. 78, 79.

in constructive channels and that failure largely neutralized the potentiality of his great endowment. He was at one time the equal of any man in the ranks of the American Methodist Church, and by all indications he should have been one of the towering figures of its history. Almost single-handed and alone, he fought the church to a stand for a whole decade, but his was the genius of resistance and attack—not that of a builder. His impact upon his age, therefore, is preceded by a minus sign; and his lifework is a pathetic subtraction when God manifestly made it possible for him to become a prince among the builders of Zion.

There were other instances of revolt about this time, but none of them became serious and troublesome. In 1787 the Negroes of Philadelphia withdrew and formed a separate society for which Bishop William White, of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Pennsylvania, ordained a minister. In 1816 this movement was organized under the name of the African Methodist Episcopal Church; and Richard Allen, whom Asbury ordained a deacon in 1799, was elected Bishop. In 1791 William Hammett, an Irish orator-preacher who claimed connection with the British Conference, created dissensions in Charleston, South Carolina, and organized the Primitive Methodist Church, which was as short-lived as its rise had been spectacular. And in 1796, the Negroes of Wesley Chapel in New York withdrew and formed a separate congregation. They built a church in 1800 which they named Zion. Under agreement, the Methodist Episcopal Church furnished its ministry until 1820 when they became dissatisfied on account of some action of the General Conference of that year, and in 1821 they organized themselves as the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

The years between the first General Conference in 1792 and the second General Conference in 1796 were

largely occupied with the O'Kelly contest which we have already discussed. Asbury, in order to meet the convenience of the preachers scattered over the wide territory occupied by the church, greatly multiplied the number of Annual Conferences. In 1793, the number reached nineteen and Jesse Lee, who believed that the Annual Conference was the bulwark of Methodist liberty, was strongly opposed to this increase of the yearly conferences. He held that the effect was to reduce the importance of the Conference that was nearest to the membership; and that it eliminated the rank and file of the people from all active and direct participation in the control of the church. Asbury was too sagacious and the memory of the O'Kelly trouble was too fresh in his mind for him to risk another schismatic movement, and by 1795 the number of Annual Conferences had been reduced to seven. The number did not exceed that for several years.

Asbury's mind returned in 1793 to his original idea of promoting education upon the plan of Mr. Wesley's Kingswood school; and he issued an address to the church on that subject. The affairs of the church were not getting forward, and the Conferences of 1794 passed a resolution designating the last Friday in February, 1795, as a day "of solemn fasting and prayer;" and the last Thursday in October as a day "of solemn and general thanksgiving" throughout the church. On the seventh day of December, 1795, the church suffered a great loss in the burning of Cokesbury College. It was a total loss and the Methodists were greatly stunned by the catastrophe. Through the zeal of Dr. Coke and the interest of the Methodists of Baltimore, the College was relocated in that city in 1796, but in 1798 the new plant shared the fate of its lamented predecessor. The bishops and the people were too much discouraged to undertake a revival of the

ill-fated enterprise. On August 4, 1796, Benjamin Abbott who was one of the most effective evangelists of the church died, and on December 20, of the same year, Captain Thomas Webb died in Bristol, England.

Probably no quadrennium in the history of the church ever made a poorer statistical exhibit than did this; but the measure of the achievements are not discovered through the tabulated results. It was a period in which the Methodist organization was discovering and developing its own strength, and was laying the foundation for the substantial conquests soon to follow. As the quadrennium drew to a close, the storm which broke in 1792 was somewhat abated; the preachers came to the General Conference with an intelligent understanding of the need; and they addressed themselves to the task of making laws that were constructive rather than defensive. They were probably chastened in spirit by the consciousness of the barren years of controversy through which they had passed; and they were, therefore, amenable to spiritual appeal as they had not been in the heat of battle. Certainly the great ministerial losses must have admonished them of their need for recovering the fervor and devotion of the days of their beginning.

The second General Conference met in Baltimore, October 20, 1796, and it continued in session for fourteen days. No roll of the Conference was kept, but Bishop Asbury says that there were about one hundred preachers present. That estimate is confirmed by the manuscript journal of William Colbert who was a member of the Conference. Only about half of the number qualified for membership were present; and the lack of full representation indicates one of the problems which grew with the extension of the borders of the church. The distance to the seat of the General Conference made the frontier preachers unwilling to



attend, and so whole sections of the church were without representation. Attendance upon the Conference deprived the circuits of ministerial supply and service during the time of its sitting; and the journey to and from the Conference made this absence cover a period of two months in some cases. This became quite a problem for both the preachers and the people.

The objection raised by Jesse Lee and others to the multiplying of the Annual Conferences led to legislation fixing the number of such Conferences and their boundaries. It was provided that there should be six Annual Conferences: The New England, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Virginia, South Carolina, and Western. Provision was made for some elasticity in caring for new circuits. The membership of the Annual Conferences was to be made up of all the traveling preachers within their boundaries, who were in full connection, or who were to be received into full connection. This is still the rule for ministerial qualification, but there has since been the introduction of lay delegates also.

Among other things, the General Conference adopted a uniform Deed of Settlement containing the "Trust Clause" under which properties are acquired and held for the uses of the church. The time of probation for an elder was fixed at two years after he becomes a deacon; and regulations were made for the licensing, ordaining and trial of local preachers, but they were not admitted to elder's orders. No books were permitted to be published without the consent of a bishop and two-thirds of the Philadelphia Conference. The Methodists were prohibited from marrying unbelievers unless they were seekers after salvation. There was talk of electing another bishop, but Dr. Coke offered himself for full time and residence in America. Only a small minority of the Conference opposed it and the offer was accepted. There was a move to repeal the

law creating the presiding eldership, but it did not prevail. The wives of preachers were allowed \$64, the same salary as their husbands; and the frightful losses by location brought the Conference to realize that something must be done to relieve the anxiety of married preachers for their families, and to provide for preachers on account of age and impaired health. One of the most important acts of the Conference, therefore, was the measure creating the "Chartered Fund," for the care of worn-out preachers and their dependents. This Fund was chartered under the laws of Pennsylvania and its offices were located in Philadelphia; and no single move of the church has done more to reassure the traveling preachers, or to save their loved ones from actual suffering and humiliation.

Two of the most important matters before the Conference were slavery and the sale and use of spirituous liquors. On the subject of slavery the action did not go further than earnest caution concerning those admitted to official station and that, in admitting slaveholders to office in the church, the preachers should "require security" of them to emancipate their slaves whenever the law and the circumstances might admit. No slaveholder might be received into the church until he had been spoken to freely on the subject of slavery, and any member who might sell a slave was to be expelled immediately.<sup>10</sup> Touching the sale and use of intoxicating liquors, the Conference said: "If any member of our society retail or give spirituous liquors, and anything disorderly be transacted under his roof on this account, the preacher who has the oversight of the circuit shall proceed against him as in the case of other immoralities; and the person accused shall be cleared, suspended, or excluded, according to his conduct, as on other charges of immorality."<sup>11</sup> After providing for

<sup>10</sup> *Journal of the General Conference, 1796 to 1836*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

the next quadrennial Conference, the session adjourned.

Although the General Conference voted to accept the offer of Dr. Coke to be Bishop Asbury's associate in America, the plans which Asbury drew for their joint operations practically eliminated Dr. Coke from every semblance of episcopal prerogative and authority. Dr. Coke says that it was proposed to send him off to spend the winter in New England as a *mere* preacher while Asbury was to hold the three southern conferences entirely by himself, and that he was not consulted concerning any appointment whatever. Asbury's greatness and service can not be accepted as an apology for his treatment of Dr. Coke, and with that simple statement of opinion, we dismiss that phase of the subject. A short time before the Conference adjourned, the British Minutes arrived and Dr. Coke was appointed to preside in Ireland. Accordingly he secured a temporary release from his engagement until the Irish Conference was over. He sailed from Charleston early in February 1797; and he returned about the middle of November, in time to attend the Virginia Conference at Lane's chapel. He found Asbury's attitude unaltered; and he says that when Asbury was too weak to attend the session of the South Carolina Conference at Charleston, he ignored him completely and appointed Jonathan Jackson to station the preachers and Jesse Lee to preside at the sessions.<sup>12</sup>

Early in 1797 Asbury became ill with "intermittent fever." He attended the Virginia and the South Carolina Conferences; but he did not undertake to go to Kentucky; and in September his body became so swollen as to indicate a very serious condition. He made an effort to go to the New England Conference at Wiltbraham, Massachusetts, but he was too ill to continue

<sup>12</sup> See *Asbury's Journal*, Vol. II, p. 359.

the journey. He wrote Jesse Lee asking him to attend and Lee presided by election of the Conference. At that Conference Asbury launched another of his unconstitutional schemes. He nominated Richard Whatcoat, Francis Poythress and Jesse Lee for "assistant bishops in the United States;" and he proposed that they should be elected by the Annual Conferences. The New England Conference, under the presidency of Jesse Lee, rejected the proposition, it "being thought contrary to the form of Discipline."<sup>13</sup>

After the General Conference of 1796, the church began to make slow but substantial recovery from the O'Kelly troubles. The membership increase was not great at first; but by 1802, as we have already stated, the total number of members in 1792 had been reached again. The losses through locations in the ministry, however, continued for a number of years longer. On September 27, 1798, John Dickins died of yellow fever in Philadelphia. He was English born and was one of the ablest and most constructive of the early preachers, and he was father of the Methodist Book Concern. Ezekiel Cooper was chosen to succeed Dickins in the management of the Book Concern. The four years following the second General Conference were made memorable by visitations of yellow fever which laid in desolation the northern cities; but they were, notwithstanding, years of substantial growth in all particulars.

The manner in which the Methodist circuit rider followed the trail of the pioneer settlers over the mountains and into the very heart of the great American wilderness is one of the most thrilling stories of religious adventure on record. The names of Jeremiah Lambert on the Holston, James Haw in Kentucky, Tobias Gibson in Mississippi, Elisha Bowman in Louis-

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<sup>13</sup> *Memoir of the Rev. Jesse Lee with Extracts etc.*, Thrift, pp. 229-331.



iana, John Kobler in Ohio, Benjamin Young in Illinois, and John Travis in Missouri will be treasured recollections of Methodist history as long as there are those who appreciate the sacrificial spirit in men. They represent the vanguard of the Methodist itinerants in the winning of the West; and in their light, shine the names of such consecrated pioneers of the local ministry as Francis Clark, Francis McCormick and many others, who without official recognition or hope of personal reward laid the foundation for the spiritual empire of the Methodists in the valley of the Mississippi and its eastern tributaries.

The settlement of the western country was made extremely difficult by the Alleghenies—a great mountain wall extending from north to south almost the entire length of the Atlantic seaboard. And added to the other handicaps was the peril of Indian hostility which was a constant threat to the march of civilization. The settlement of the West came about through the constant extension of the Virginia and the North Carolina frontiers. The hardy pioneers pressed over the barriers into the richer farm lands and the men of the Daniel Boone type followed the game trails deep into the great forests. They often followed the water-courses into the interior until they were quite detached from the older settlements. Many an adventurous man fell before the fury of the savage; but others were lured on by his footprints, and the trail was constantly lengthened until the rude huts of the backwoodsmen were to be found in hundreds of clearings which dotted the valleys beyond the mountains.

Wherever the settler's cabin was to be found, thither the itinerant preacher made his way, there was heard the voice of those consecrated servants of the church, and there was the beginning of a Methodist circuit. The preacher shared the hospitality of the

frontiersmen, he left with them the treasures of his own experience, and he awakened in their minds and hearts the joys and the fellowship of his immortal hope. In 1783 Jeremiah Lambert was assigned to the Holston—the first assignment to a work beyond the Alleghenies. The name, Holston, as the head of a circuit appeared in the minutes continuously from 1783 to 1826; from 1802 to 1825 it appears as the name of a District; and in 1825 it was honored with a place in the roll of Annual Conferences, a distinction which it retains to the present day. Holston circuit was served by some of the most devout and capable men of the church. Among them were Henry Willis, Jeremiah Mastin, Mark Whittaker, Stith Mead, Tobias Gibson, William Burke, Thomas Wilkerson and John Sale. Among the presiding elders were John Kobler, Francis Poythress and William McKendree. The membership of the Holston circuit grew from the unimpressive 76 reported by Jeremiah Lambert in 1784, to more than sixteen thousand members and forty-six preachers, according to the report at the end of the first year as Holston Conference; and the territory became one of the great Methodist strongholds.

On the last Sunday in April 1786, Asbury says: "I preached three times, and made a collection to defray the expenses of sending missionaries to the western settlements; I spoke twice on the same subject through the course of the week."<sup>14</sup> At the Conference beginning May 8, he appointed James Haw and Benjamin Ogden to Kentucky. Haw did not attend the next Conference; but he reported by letter that ninety members had been received; and he made a strong plea for reinforcements. To this plea he added that none should be sent who were "afraid to die." Thomas Williamson and Wilson Lee responded and were sent forth to their

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<sup>14</sup> *Asbury's Journal*, Vol. I. p. 511.

chosen task. Kentucky at that day was typically frontier, both in location and in reputation. The story of "Rogue's Harbor" in Logan County is graphically described in the *Autobiography* of Peter Cartwright. He says that it was the retreat of thieves and of other desperate characters who were fleeing from justice; and that it was the rendezvous of apostate ministers who found there a congenial atmosphere. He tells of meeting and ministering to Beverly Allen, then a practicing physician, whose ministry came to a tragic end, and who was a fugitive from justice for the killing of Major Forsythe in Georgia. He mentions also a Baptist minister who took to drink. In that same section William Burke says that in 1795 he found James Haw who had located and embraced the views of O'Kelly, and that he was a great disturber of the peace of the church, which he had helped to plant.<sup>15</sup> But despite the handicaps, Methodism grew and prospered; and under the leadership of such men as Francis Poythress, Peter Massie, Barnabas McHenry and Wilson Lee, at the end of the first five years the new mission reported five circuits, ten preachers and nearly two thousand members.

In 1798 John Kobler and William Burke were assigned to Cumberland circuit; but Kobler left William Burke on the circuit alone and he went over into Ohio and established a circuit, "Beginning at Columbia, and running up the little Miami and Mad River to Zanesville, thence down the Big Miami to Cincinnati."<sup>16</sup> Henry Smith was assigned to Miami in 1799, and he formed Scioto circuit which he served together with Miami circuit for the next two years. In 1802 Benjamin Young and Elisha Bowman were the preachers; and two years later the work was formed into the Ohio

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<sup>15</sup> *Sketches of Western Methodism*, Finley, p. 46.

<sup>16</sup> *Christian Advocate and Journal* (Article by Kobler) August 5, 1831.

District with five circuits, eight preachers and over twelve hundred members. About the time that John Kobler began the work on Miami circuit, Philip Gatch, once an itinerant preacher, but now a local preacher, moved into that section and he and Francis McCormick helped to make the ministry of Kobler and his successors effective. From Ohio Benjamin Young crossed over into Illinois and began work there.

In 1799 Tobias Gibson, a native of South Carolina, went to Natchez, Mississippi, and began work in that section. The Minutes of that year show his appointment as Little Pee Dee and Anson; but Nathan Bangs says that he was "released from his regular work in consequence of ill health,"<sup>17</sup> and an article on "Early Methodism in Mississippi" says that in 1799 he came on a visit to relatives at Natchez, and that he was assigned as a missionary in 1800.<sup>18</sup> This date of beginning is supported by the fact that sixty members were reported to the Conference in 1800 when the name of Tobias Gibson first appears in the Minutes in connection with that mission. Gibson served this circuit in the far south for three years without assistance, except such as he found on the field. In 1802, although he was in an extremely feeble state of health, he attended the session of the Western Conference at Cumberland and made an appeal for help, which was answered by the appointment of Moses Floyd to assist him. The next Conference added H. Harrison to the force, while Tobias Gibson and A. Amos were listed as supernumerary. Learner Blackman and Nathan Barnes came in 1805, and in 1806 the Mississippi District was formed. The new District extended into Louisiana, it consisted of four circuits and was served by six preachers, including the presiding elder. Asbury wrote

17 *History of the M. E. Church*, Bangs, Vol. II. p. 82.

18 *Christian Advocate*, New Orleans, September 30, 1854.



Dr. Coke that he had sent six preachers into this section; and later in the year he wrote again: "Our Mississippi missionaries are pushing on southwest toward the Pacific Ocean."<sup>19</sup> These devoted apostles of early Methodism were given but ten dollars each for their long and perilous journey. Such is the story of the expansion of the church in those difficult but heroic days.

The General Conference of 1800 met in Baltimore, May 6, instead of October 20, as originally fixed. This change was made in order to avoid the dangers incident to the scourges of yellow fever which befell the coast cities at the later season. The interest of the church is shown as much by what the Conference undertook, as by the legislation enacted. Among the efforts which failed, was a move to make the office of Presiding Elder elective; a move to require the bishops to accept the counsel of a stationing Committee in making appointments; and an effort to secure a delegated General Conference. The O'Kelly defection was on the wane, but that which led up to it was still an issue in the church. The Conference decided to elect one bishop and that all the bishops should be of equal authority. On the first ballot Richard Whatcoat and Jesse Lee each received the same number of votes, but on the second ballot Whatcoat was elected. This election came too late for him to make a great contribution to the history of the church—he was already an old man. The number of Annual Conferences was raised from six to seven.

The slavery issue was discussed and a number of futile efforts were made to control it. The preachers were required to emancipate their slaves; but for the membership at large, only an address was sent to the societies on the subject of slavery, and an address to

<sup>19</sup> *Centennial History of American Methodism*, Atkinson, p. 134.

legislatures asking for the enactment of laws looking to gradual emancipation. The Conference gave authority for the ordination of properly recommended colored preachers. Richard Allen, who later became the first bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, had been ordained a deacon by Asbury in 1799. The African brethren in New York were urged to incorporate, as the African brethren in Philadelphia had done, and the name African Methodist Episcopal Church was proposed. For the first time in the history of the church, effort was made to secure a systematic regulation of the financial affairs of the societies. The support of the preachers was increased from sixty-four to eighty dollars each for the preacher and his wife, with an allowance for dependents—children under seven years were allowed sixteen dollars each, and those between seven and fourteen were allowed twenty-four dollars each. The next General Conference was fixed for Baltimore, May 6, 1804, and only those who had been as much as four years in the traveling connection were eligible for membership.<sup>20</sup>

The most remarkable feature of the Conference was the revival spirit which was manifest throughout its sessions, and which continued to spread until it pervaded the entire church. The years 1789 and 1790 had been great revival years; but, beginning with the O'Kelly agitation, a spiritual dearth cast its disheartening and deadening shadow across more than a quadrennium of Methodist history. We have already referred to the fact that the Conferences of 1794 inaugurated a move for deepening the spiritual life of the church; and following the session of the General Conference of 1796 there was a distinct upturn in the fortunes of Methodism; but the movement did not attain the proportions of a general revival until the

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<sup>20</sup> See *Journal of the General Conferences, 1796 to 1836*, pp. 24-45.

closing years of the century. It was at this time that some of the peculiar revival customs of the Methodists were developed, such as the "mourners' bench" and the camp-meeting—an institution which attained great prominence in the evangelism of the church.

The revival began in Tennessee and Kentucky under the joint promotion of Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists. Two brothers, William and John McGee; James McGready; and William McKendree were among the most prominent leaders of it. The revival at the General Conference continued for some days after the session had ended; and soon after, more than one hundred joined the society in Duck Creek, Delaware, as the result of the revival there. Virginia was greatly affected, tidings from New England brought news of a general revival, and Philadelphia and New York had a divine visitation also. In 1801 McKendree reported that 3,250 had been added to the church in the Western Conference alone. A flame of revival passion swept over the entire field, and the dawn of the nineteenth century witnessed a new demonstration of the power of Methodist evangelism. The origin of the camp-meeting is claimed for Carolina Methodism,<sup>21</sup> but it was in Tennessee and Kentucky that its effectiveness was established, and it became an instrument which dominated the evangelism of the church for more than a quarter of a century. In 1811 Asbury said: "Our camp-meetings, I think, amount to between four and five hundred annually." He said also that they continued for six or eight days and it was not uncommon for them to be attended by ten thousand persons.<sup>22</sup>

During the quadrennium beginning at 1800, the membership of the Methodist Church had a phenomenal

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21 *History of Methodism in South Carolina*, Shipp, p. 272.

22 Letter of Asbury, *Arminian Magazine*, London, 1812, p. 316.



increase—in round numbers, from sixty-four thousand to one hundred and thirteen thousand. There were no epochal events in the period. George Daugherty and John Harper were grossly mistreated in Charleston on account of the slavery feeling there; and Daugherty was thrust under a pump by a band of ruffians, and was saved from being drowned by the heroism and defiance of a Mrs. Kugley. Rev. F. A. Mood says that Daugherty never recovered from the ill treatment of that terrible night, and that his death in 1807 was due to the exposure and abuse of that occasion.<sup>23</sup> On January 29, 1801, Reverend Devereaux Jarratt, friend of the early Methodists and of true Christianity, died; and in him there passed one of the greatest forces for righteousness developed in the pioneer days of American Christianity.

The General Conference of 1804 marked the end of the first twenty years in the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and the roll indicates that there were not more than eight or ten present who had attended the Christmas Conference; and only seventeen preachers on the effective list were in the ministry in 1784. The session of 1804, like many since, was more remarkable for its heated discussions than for substantial achievements; and we learn more about the situation in the church from what was attempted than from what was done. Immediately after the completion of the organization, the Conference resolved itself into a committee of the whole for the revision of the Discipline; and it read and revised section by section and paragraph by paragraph the entire contents. There were times of such heated debate that spectators were excluded and the Conference proceeded behind closed doors. Once the venerable Whatcoat arose to protest against the temper of the debates and to plead for the

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<sup>23</sup> *Methodism in Charleston*, Mood, p. 90.



"rule of reason."<sup>24</sup> Thomas Lyell moved to delete everything from the Discipline on the subject of the Presiding Elder; and a motion was made to prohibit preachers from using spirituous liquors, but both motions were lost.<sup>25</sup> A two-year time limit on the pastorate was adopted, and the Book Concern was ordered to be moved from Philadelphia to New York. There was a spirited contest over the nomination of two trustees of the Chartered Fund. They were William Budd and John Wood, both of whom had withdrawn from the Church. Their nominations failed of confirmation by a small margin. The slavery issue resulted in such disagreement that it was proposed to leave the entire matter to the bishops to fix a section to suit themselves; but Asbury refused to act under that resolution. Finally a committee was named to prepare an *Address* to the church.<sup>26</sup> The Conference adjourned on May 23, having been in session seventeen days. William Colbert observes: "In the afternoon ended our General Conference, which is the fourth General Conference I have been at, and I think the dullest of three if not of the four."<sup>27</sup>

Richard Whatcoat died at the home of Senator Richard Bassett in Dover, Delaware, July 5, 1806. His death had been expected for some time; and more than two months before it happened, Bishop Asbury proposed another irregular and arbitrary scheme, which Jesse Lee says, "Would have upset and destroyed the rules and regulations of the Methodists, respecting the election and ordination of Bishops." He says further: "It was said that the plan originated in the New York Conference (May 16, 1806), which was as follows: To call a delegated conference of seven members from each conference, chosen by the conference, to meet in Bal-

<sup>24</sup> *Journal of the General Conferences, 1796 to 1836*, p. 53.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 68.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, See pp. 51-68.

<sup>27</sup> *Centennial History of American Methodism*, Atkinson, p. 513.

timore on the fourth of July, 1807, to choose superintendents, etc. This plan was adopted by four of the conferences: viz., New York, New England, the Western and South Carolina conferences; and the delegates were accordingly chosen. But when it was proposed to the Virginia conference which met in Newbern, in February, 1807, they refused to take it under consideration, and rejected it as being pointedly in opposition to all the rules of our church. The bishop laboured hard to carry the point, but he laboured in vain; and the whole business of that dangerous plan was upset by the Virginia Conference. The inventors and defenders of that project might have meant well; but they certainly erred in judgment."<sup>28</sup> It is to be hoped that the Conference used more diplomatic language than did the historian who records the incident, but there can be no doubt that the old warrior "bit the dust." The hand may have been that of the New York Conference, but the voice was that of the veteran Asbury.

The outstanding events of this period are soon told. They were the O'Kelly schism; the creation of the Chartered Fund for the maintenance of superannuate preachers and their dependents, widows and orphans; the arrangement of a financial plan for the church; fixing a two-year time limit for the pastorate; the conquest of the vast wilderness lying beyond the Allegheny mountains; and the great revival which swept the entire church in the opening years of the new century. Before the year 1808, the Methodist Church had entered practically all the territory east of the Mississippi River and had crossed into Missouri, where Joseph Oglesby preached about 1805, John Travis was sent as a missionary in 1807, and Jesse Walker established the church in St. Louis about 1820. The Church had

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<sup>28</sup> *History of the Methodists*, Lee, pp. 344, 345.

reached a membership total of more than one hundred and forty-four thousand, with an active itinerant ministry of five hundred and sixteen. It had fought through its problems, had found its strength, and its sinews were hardened for the long stretch of years ahead.





## CHAPTER V.

### CHANGE OF LEADERS AND POLITY

WHEN the Methodist Church was established in 1784 the primary object of the founders was to set up a ministry and to provide adequate means for the spiritual care of the people of the societies. The first Discipline of the Church was largely given over to directions concerning the spiritual agencies which were already in use, and there was little effort to develop the ecclesiastical machinery necessary to the direction and control of the organization. The Discipline was more a manual for evangelistic workers than a code of ecclesiastical law. Such regulation as had been developed was a kind of patch-work to meet emergencies; it reflected the personal views of the leaders rather than a well conceived and consistent policy of administration; and it became more and more inadequate for meeting the needs of the rapidly expanding Church. Such was the situation at the end of the first quarter of a century of Methodist history.

The period beginning with the year 1808 was, therefore, an epochal time in the history of the Church; for it was then that the personal factors which had determined control were replaced by a regulatory scheme administered chiefly by those who neither sustained nor claimed a paternal relation to the movement. At this time, Dr. Coke was practically eliminated from consideration as a bishop; and while Asbury continued to be a potent influence, his age and declining health together with the election of the alert and independent

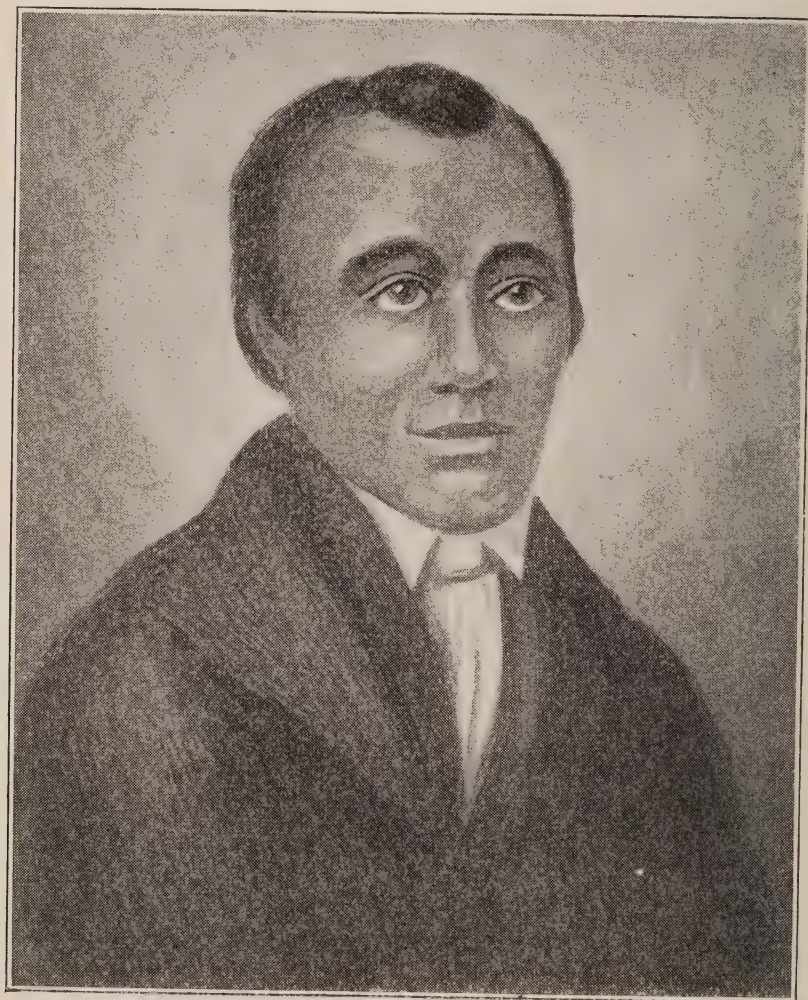
McKendree to share his authority, lessened the absoluteness of his control. During this period also the stars that had shone so long in the Methodist sky were rapidly descending toward the horizon, and a leadership with the outlook and the ideals of a new era was pressing to the front.

The change was not more marked, however, in the personnel of administration than in the form of the government itself. At the beginning, every preacher on the continent was admitted to an equal share in the control of the Church, and those who had traveled four years and were in full connection were still entitled to that privilege. The unwisdom of such a scheme of administration became more and more evident as the numbers increased and the interests of the Methodists became more complicated. The General Conference became unwieldy and the territorial expansion introduced an even more serious difficulty. The preachers were unwilling to leave their circuits in remote sections of the country and make the long horseback journey to Baltimore where the Conferences always met. This caused influential sections of the Church to be left without representation, and gave to the section around Baltimore a preponderant influence in its legislation and control. These facts led to the introduction of a representative form of government, in order that every section might have fair representation and its interests be protected. Thus the era of a ministerial democracy came to an end, and a Conference of unlimited authority was replaced by one limited in its membership and operating under specific restrictions of its power.

The General Conference met in Baltimore, May 6, 1808; and the most important item of its business was the passage of a law for holding a quadrennial General Conference which should be a delegated body. Accord-



BISHOP RICHARD ALLEN,



Founder and First Bishop of the A. M. E. Church. Ordained by  
Bishop Francis Asbury in 1799.



ing to Asbury's Journal, Jesse Lee proposed such a body, on July 7, 1791;<sup>1</sup> and, as we have pointed out, Asbury sought to convene such a body on July 4, 1807, for the purpose of electing a successor to Bishop Whatcoat who had died. That proposal was defeated by the Virginia Conference; but the proposition now came forward in a regular manner, upon a memorial from the New York Conference in which the New England, the Western and the South Carolina Conferences concurred. The resolution for a delegated General Conference was introduced, and a committee of two from each of the seven Conferences was named to draft the plan. The committee named a subcommittee, consisting of Ezekiel Cooper, Joshua Soule and Philip Bruce, to frame a report for approval or modification. Cooper and Soule prepared separate drafts and that of Soule, with slight modifications, was adopted by the committee. When the committee report came to a vote it was defeated by a count of 57 to 64. It was discovered that the measure had been defeated by the Baltimore and Philadelphia Conferences, the chief beneficiaries under the old system; and the dissatisfaction on that account came near to disrupting the Conference. The New England and the Western delegates prepared to leave the Conference; but Asbury, McKendree and Hedding prevailed upon them to remain.<sup>2</sup> On a motion to reconsider, it was decided that the next General Conference should be composed of one delegate for every five members of the Annual Conference, to be sent by seniority or election as the Annual Conference might choose; and that it should meet in New York, May 1, 1812, and quadrennially thereafter, at such place as might be selected. The Conference then adopted what have since been known as the "Restric-

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1 *Asbury's Journal*, Vol. II. p. 126.

2 *History of Methodism*, Buckley, Vol. I. pp. 398-400.

tive Rules," which limit the power of the General Conference in the particulars therein specified.<sup>3</sup>

The discussion of the delegated General Conference was suspended for a debate on the subject of electing presiding elders. This debate consumed practically two days and the resolution was defeated by a vote of 52 to 73. In the General Conference of 1812, a resolution to elect presiding elders on nomination of the bishop was defeated by the slender margin of three votes. In 1816 the same resolution was introduced with the addition that the bishop should make the appointments with the presiding elders' advice and consent, but it failed again. The General Conference of 1820 passed a measure requiring the election of presiding elders, the vote being 61 to 25; but its constitutionality was challenged and the opposition to the measure was so pronounced that the action was "suspended," and was finally rescinded in 1828.

A particularly interesting feature of the Conference of 1808 was the report of the "Committee of Review." This committee was composed of Samuel Coate, Martin Ruter, James H. Mellard, Jesse Lee, Nelson Reed, Joshua Wells and William Burke. Jesse Lee submitted to them his manuscript of *A History of the Methodists*, with a view to having it recommended for publication. The committee achieved distinction for itself by the report: "We have taken a cursory view of a manuscript entitled, *A History of the Methodists of the United States of America*; but as the work appears, in their view, more like a simple and crude narrative of the proceedings of the Methodists than a history, they think it would be improper to publish it."<sup>4</sup> Jesse Lee published the book himself in 1810, and it has long been regarded as an invaluable source of Methodist history.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of the General Conferences, 1796 to 1836*, pp. 76-78, 88, 89.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

An incident which greatly disturbed the minds of the members of this Conference was a recently revealed private and confidential letter which Dr. Coke wrote to Bishop White of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Pennsylvania. The letter was written from Richmond, Virginia, April 24, 1791; and it appears that Dr. Coke was seeking an interview with Bishop White relative to a possible merging of the American Methodists with the Episcopal Church. Nothing came of the suggestion, but it was certainly not prudent in Dr. Coke to have undertaken such an unauthorized negotiation, and the secrecy enjoined did not add to the prestige of the writer of the letter. Dr. Coke met the issue squarely and his frank explanation of the case, with the reasons which he gave for his action, was accepted and that was the end of it.<sup>5</sup> William McKendree was elected bishop, and the Conference concluded its work on May 26.

The quadrennium following the General Conference of 1808 was a period of expansion and growth in the Church, but it was not remarkable for unusual or outstanding incidents. In 1803 the eccentric Lorenzo Dow is said to have preached the first Protestant sermon in Alabama, but no permanent work was established until 1808 when Matthew P. Sturdivant was sent to the Tombigbee circuit. The territory comprising the circuit was located in Alabama and Mississippi and was included in the South Carolina Conference. Sturdivant had the assistance of Josiah Randle, the presiding elder, establishing the work on the Tombigbee, and the next year Michael Burdge was sent to assist him. Bishop Asbury visited Canada in July, 1811, but the visit had no important significance either for the Bishop or the Church. During the four years there was a gain in the membership of approxi-

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<sup>5</sup> *History of the M. E. Church*, Bangs, Vol. II, pp. 200-214.

mately 40,000 and the Methodist Church could no longer be regarded as an ephemeral result of the great Revival. It is likely that the Methodist people were beginning to feel that their years of struggle were over and that the Church was to enjoy an uninterrupted march in the conquest of the continent; but ominous clouds were already upon the horizon, and the day of unimpeded progress was still far away.

According to the action of the Conference of 1808, the first delegated General Conference met in New York, May 1, 1812. There were 90 delegates present as against 128 at the previous session in Baltimore. There were only four names on the roll, besides that of Asbury, who are known to have been present at the Christmas Conference. They were Freeborn Garrettson, William Phoebe, Nelson Reed, and Thomas Ware. But there were present many sons of the Church whose names added strength and distinction to the councils of the Methodists for many years afterward. Such were Nathan Bangs, Elijah Hedding, Joshua Soule, Philip Bruce, Lovick Pierce, John Early, Enoch George, Robert R. Roberts, Ezekiel Cooper, Thomas L. Douglass and Thomas F. Sargent. Notwithstanding this large and influential group of men representing a new order in the life of the Church, the Conference was extremely cautious and conservative. More than three days were spent in organization and in the adoption of rules of procedure, and not a single epoch-making law was passed. The controversy over the creation of the Genesee Conference was settled by the adoption of a resolution which declared it legally organized. Local preachers were made eligible for the order of elder after four years spent as deacon. A law was passed making the stewards elective by the Quarterly Conference, on nomination of the preacher in charge,



instead of being appointed by the preacher as had been the practice up to this time.

Some measures which failed to pass indicate the mind of the Church respecting social questions which were to come into prominence at a later day. James Axley of Tennessee made a motion to prohibit preachers, local and traveling, from retailing spirituous liquors; but for some unexplained reason the motion failed to carry. John Sale made a motion to prohibit preachers and members from buying or having anything to do with lottery tickets, and on that proposal, action was deferred for four years.<sup>6</sup> Although these measures were not adopted, they show the nature of the problem which the Church was facing in that day, and they indicate no less clearly the social and moral progress of the Church in the bitter contest which it has waged against such evils.

About six weeks after the adjournment of the General Conference, the United States declared war on England, June 18, 1812. This led not only to the disturbances incident to military operations, as had been the case during the Revolution; but to complications with Canada which had far-reaching influence upon the history of the Church. In 1814 the British captured and burned Washington, and they made an attack upon Baltimore. This campaign carried the disasters of war into the very heart of Methodism, and there was a loss in the membership for that year of approximately four thousand. The war was not popular in New England, and in New York a group of clergymen went even so far as to refuse to pray for their civil rulers. The disruption of Canadian relations resulted in discrimination against American preachers assigned to the work in Canada, and in the

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<sup>6</sup> *Journal of the General Conferences, 1796 to 1836*, pp. 114, 117, 121.

final separation of that field from the Church which had pioneered and developed it.

Pliny Brett of the New England Conference withdrew from the Methodists in 1813, and formed a denomination known as "Reformed Methodists." The movement seems to have originated around Cape Cod and it appears to have been a holiness group. It never became of great importance and the remnant of the schismatics are said to have joined with Orange Scott and others in the organization known as "The Wesleyan Methodist Connection in America," in 1843. Other withdrawals at this time were "The African Union Church" founded by Rev. Peter Spencer in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1813; "The African Methodist Episcopal Church," Philadelphia, 1816, of which Richard Allen was the first bishop; the "Stillwellites," a band of about three hundred who withdrew from John Street Church, New York, in 1817; and "The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church," organized in 1820. The Stillwellites constituted an ephemeral organization named after their leader, William Stillwell, who is credited with having inspired and promoted the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

The final facts of interest in this quadrennium were the passing of both Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury, to whom belong a large share of the credit for the establishment and the building of the American Methodist Church. Dr. Coke died May 3, 1814, as he journeyed to India at the head of a Methodist mission, enterprised by himself and financed out of his private funds—the last heroic venture of the great missionary statesman of Methodism, and friend of the whole heathen world. Just a month before the General Conference assembled in Baltimore the toil worn body of Francis Asbury gave way under the strain of his labors and sufferings. The

end came at the home of George Arnold, near Fredericksburg in Virginia, March 31, 1816. Both Coke and Asbury died as they had lived: Coke on the bosom of the ocean, bound upon missionary conquest, and Asbury at the end of an itinerant trail approximately three hundred thousand miles in length. When the General Conference convened, it was dominated by thoughts of Asbury, and the first action that was taken was on a resolution to remove his remains to Baltimore. This was carried out during the session of the Conference when the entire body joined in the melancholy march to Eutaw Street church where his remains were placed beneath the pulpit, but were later removed to Mt. Olivet cemetery.

The General Conference remained in session twenty-one days, but very little new legislation was written into the law of the Church. The allowances for the preacher and his wife were raised from \$80 to \$100; a law creating the office of District Steward was passed; and provision was made for the licensing of local preachers and exhorters. James Axley secured the passage of his resolution prohibiting the sale and use of spirituous liquors by preachers, which the previous Conference had defeated. The one thing which shows the trend of the thought of the Church at that time was the enactment of a law requiring a course of study for candidates for the ministry. As we shall see, this was an initial step which the next Conference extended by the legislation respecting the establishment of schools and colleges. The first phase of the long-drawn-out Canadian controversy was introduced at this Conference when the British delegates, on behalf of the London Methodist Missionary Society, sought to secure the withdrawal of the American Church from the Canadian field, in favor of the Wesleyan Connection. The reply of the Conference was: "We cannot consistently with

our duty to the societies of our charge in the Canadas give up any part of them or any of our chapels in those provinces to the superintendence of the British connection." Enoch George and Robert R. Roberts were elected bishops, and the Conference adjourned on May 24, for lack of a quorum.

The next four years were without incidents of Church-wide interest, except that the "Tract Society" and the "Missionary and Bible Society" were organized. The Tract Society originated with a band of consecrated women of New York City in 1817; and the Missionary and Bible Society was organized in Forsyth Street church on April 5, 1819. Among the leaders in the founding of the Missionary Society were, Freeborn Garrettson, Nathan Bangs, Joshua Soule, Thomas Mason, and Laban Clark. Under the constitution which was adopted, Bishop McKendree was made president, and Bishops George and Roberts vice presidents. The Managers of the Society issued an address in which they said: "Our ultimate object is the general good of mankind, by the extensive diffusion of experimental and practical godliness;" and the Indians, the Spanish in South America, and the French in Louisiana and Canada were mentioned as objects of special solicitude. Both of these newly organized societies were officially adopted by the succeeding General Conference, and their history has abundantly justified the foresight, the faith, and the consecration of the founders.

On November 25, 1815 Richmond Nolley, missionary to Louisiana, died from cold and exposure after he had crossed a swollen stream. In crossing he got separated from his horse and undertook to walk to a settlement, but he sank down upon his knees and died on the way. About this same time, Learner Blackman, another name associated with Methodism in Mississippi and Louisiana, was thrown from a ferry boat



into the Ohio river and lost his life. On March 11, 1816, George Shadford whose great ministry, as a missionary sent over by Mr. Wesley, did much to establish Methodism in America, died in England. He was a man of God and he died with shouts of victory upon his lips. On September 12, 1816, the Church lost another of its stalwart sons—Jesse Lee: Virginia cavalier, Revolutionary soldier, Apostle of New England, chaplain of Congress, and first historian of Methodism. He was one of the most colorful characters of the pioneer days and one of the ablest men in the building of the church. He died in Hillsborough, Maryland, where he was attending a camp meeting.

The General Conference of 1820 met in Baltimore, May 1, and this was the first Conference under the new form of government to set itself to the legislative task in a great and constructive way. It approved, with a revised constitution, the Missionary and Bible Society which had been organized in New York the year before. From the outset the missionary endeavor of the Methodists had been a matter of sporadic and personal interest, and was without either organized or constructive purpose. A collection was raised here and there to meet an appeal that was made for some special field or need, and it was in no sense a comprehensive and intelligent recognition of the missionary obligation of the church. But, by this action, the Conference set up machinery for a steady and consistent promotion of the missionary enterprise of the church and made possible the concentration of effort upon specific fields and the delivery of the energy and ability of the whole church upon its great task. From this point dates the splendid missionary accomplishments of the American Methodists. The Conference adopted the Tract Society also, an agency closely affiliated with the missionary task, as it became the accredited medium for the dis-

semination of information respecting the whole undertaking of the Church.

At this Conference William Capers introduced the resolution instituting the District Conference for local preachers who had been licensed for two years or more. This Conference was to be presided over by the presiding elder, or in his absence an elected chairman; and to it was transferred the licensing, recommendation for admission and orders, and regulation of the local preachers. The only right reserved to the Quarterly Conference was that of recommending to the District Conference. Dr. Capers said of that law: "It was my first essay at making rules and regulations for the Church, and was alike successful and unlucky."<sup>7</sup> Dr. Bangs' characterization of it as a "startling innovation," was not altogether fair. The resolution seems to have evoked little discussion and to have passed with little opposition. Dr. Capers said that the agitation on "the Presiding Elder question" around Baltimore and to the north was taken up by certain local preachers and that they "perverted it to purposes of mischief." In other sections of the Church, the District Conference was so neglected that the General Conference of 1824 made provision that the Quarterly Conference should transact the business where the District Conference failed to function,<sup>8</sup> and in 1836 the law was repealed. Since that time the local ministry has been licensed and regulated first by the Quarterly and now by the District Conference, an entirely different body from that composed entirely of local preachers.

On May 13, Joshua Soule, a native of Maine and a member of the New York Annual Conference, was elected Bishop; but just after his election a law was passed requiring the presiding elders to be elected by the Annual Conference, upon the nomination of the bishop.

<sup>7</sup> *Life of William Capers*, Wightman, pp. 222, 223.

<sup>8</sup> *Journal of the General Conferences*, 1796 to 1836, p. 280.

The Bishop-elect promptly notified the Conference that he regarded the action as violative of the constitution, and that he would not consent to ordination except with the understanding that he would not hold himself bound to obey the law just passed. Considering the very decided sentiment in favor of that issue, this was a very bold course, but it threw the Conference into confusion. Soule refused to retreat and declined to accept consecration when the body did not reconsider its action.<sup>9</sup> In the end, the operation of the law was suspended until the next General Conference; it was then pronounced null and void, but continued as unfinished business; and in 1828 it was finally rescinded. An interesting fact in connection with the election of Joshua Soule is that he was elected over Nathan Bangs by a vote of 47 to 38, and Bangs had supported the resolution for an elective presiding eldership. It is rather surprising, too, that, in his *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, Dr. Bangs devotes practically sixty pages to this Conference and the only time that the name of Joshua Soule appears is in the roll of the Conference. At the last he says that he has discussed all the acts "worthy of record, except what has been heretofore noticed concerning the election and duties of presiding elders;" and in the last paragraph he mentions incidentally the contest over the presiding eldership. The previous discussion to which he refers is in connection with elective presiding elders at the General Conference of 1812, and is in a preceding volume.<sup>10</sup>

By far the most important and forward-looking achievement in 1820, was the attention which the Conference gave to the long neglected educational problem of the church. After the disastrous experience with Cokesbury College, the Methodists became thoroughly discouraged. Asbury said, "Its enemies may rejoice,

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 205, 221, 230, 236, 237.

<sup>10</sup> *History of the M. E. Church*, Bangs, Vol. III. p. 156; Vol. II. pp. 336, 337.

and its friends need not mourn;" and it has been said that, in his attitude towards education, he became "too indifferent to this subject, especially in the ministry."<sup>11</sup> He enterprised a series of academies, but practically all of them failed; and the plan was not adequate to meet the needs of the church. The educational delinquency was beginning to be a hindrance to Methodist progress. In the beginning, the illiteracy of the pioneer preacher was accepted as part of the misfortune belonging to a new and undeveloped country; but in a day of larger things, it became a badge of reproach. In 1818 the New England Conference established Wesleyan Academy at New Market, New Hampshire; the same year Elizabeth Female Academy was established at Washington, Mississippi; and in 1819 Wesleyan Seminary was established in New York City, under the patronage of the New York Conference. The constitutions and plans of the institutions in New Hampshire and New York were submitted to the General Conference of 1820 with a petition that the bishops be permitted to appoint principals from among the preachers for a longer period than two years. The General Conference acceded to the request; and the report of the Committee on Education, after reciting the conditions confronting the church, offered a series of five resolutions, recommending to all the Annual Conferences the establishment of literary institutions under their own control as soon as practicable; and making it the special duty of the bishops to use their influence to carry the recommendations into effect in the Annual Conferences.<sup>12</sup> The effect of this action was to renew the interest of the Methodists in the cause of education and to increase the power and reach of the message of its ministry.

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 413.

<sup>12</sup> *Journal of the General Conferences, 1796 to 1836*, p. 208.



The General Conference met again in Baltimore, May 1, 1824. The session was less aggressive than had been that of 1820. For nearly a month, the Conference mulled over the problems and troubles handed forward from other sessions, and did almost nothing toward setting forth the vital interests of the church. The vexing questions growing out of Canadian relations since the war with England were still an issue before the church. John Emory, who was appointed delegate to the British Conference, was given instructions to seek to make an adjustment of the controversy. He reported to the General Conference of 1824 an agreement by which Lower Canada was to be released to the British Wesleyan Conference, and Upper Canada was to be retained as an Annual Conference under the superintendence of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. This partial settlement was adopted, but it only carried the issue forward to succeeding Conferences. In 1828 a resolution was passed in which it was agreed to erect Upper Canada into a separate church, provided that the Upper Canada Annual Conference should express such a desire. This action was carried into effect and the financial claims were finally adjusted by a trade agreement made in 1836.<sup>13</sup> The confusion which resulted from the lack of a tribunal for determining the constitutionality of an elective presiding eldership led to an effort to clothe the bishops with a limited veto power, but such a measure did not become law in the Church, South, until 1870, and four years later in the Church, North.

About this time a group of men, around Baltimore and Philadelphia, became active and aggressive in their opposition to Methodist polity. They designated themselves "Reformers." Among them were such men as Nicholas Snethen, Asa Shinn, Dr. Samuel K. Jennings,

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 259, 302, 338, 346, 461-463.

William S. Stockton, and Alexander McCaine. Their immediate plea was for equal lay participation in the government of the church, but their attacks were aimed at everything which had the appearance of what they termed "exclusive clerical authority." Their organizations were called "Union Societies," and the movement resulted in the formation of the Methodist Protestant Church which we will discuss later. In 1824 the Reformers presented a number of memorials and petitions to the General Conference. These were referred to a committee of twelve who declined to recommend the enactment of a law for lay representation. The report of the committee recommended a circular answer to the petitioners which, to them, was more evasive than convincing. The Conference reaffirmed the recommendations of 1820 concerning the establishment of institutions of learning, and upon pastors it urged the duty of helping to secure for all schools, teachers who were both competent and religiously sound.

Two bishops were elected, Joshua Soule and Elijah Hedding. Of this election, Dr. James Buckley said: "Soule had demonstrated himself to be the most dominating personality, except Asbury, in the history of American Methodism. Practically the father of the constitution, he declined to pledge himself to comply with an unconstitutional law, resigned, and refused to withdraw his resignation, and yet, after the rancorous discussion of four years, was the first elected."<sup>14</sup> It is probably no exaggeration to say that episcopal Methodism owes more to Joshua Soule than to any other man. He framed the constitution for the representative form of government under which it still operates; he was one of the leading spirits in the organization of the Missionary Society; he defeated the elective presiding eldership which he believed to be unconstitutional and

<sup>14</sup> *History of Methodism*, Buckley, Vol. I., pp. 437, 438.

subversive of the episcopacy; although a New Englander, he fearlessly joined fortunes with the Southern Church when it was set up under the action of 1844; and throughout his long career he was a man of bold independence. Bishop Hedding was a good and an able man, but not of the heroic type of Joshua Soule. He gave the Church a worthy administration, but always under the handicap of poor health. Both he and Soule hesitated to accept ordination, but they were finally prevailed upon to yield to the wishes of their brethren.

The discontent of the Reformers on account of the failure of their appeals was soon to bear fruit. While the General Conference of 1824 was in session, the Reformers held a convention in Baltimore, and they resolved to establish a periodical to be called *The Mutual Rights of the Ministers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church*. This publication was to replace the *Methodist Repository* which had been established in 1821 by William R. Stockton, a pious layman of Philadelphia. It was to be devoted to the advocacy of a more democratic form of government for the Methodist Church, and particularly the introduction of the laity into its control. The new publication stirred up opposition and bitterness to such an extent that Dennis P. Dorsey and William C. Pool were expelled from the Baltimore Conference and about fifty women withdrew from the Methodist churches of the city. In 1827 another convention was held in Baltimore, at which time a memorial was sent to the approaching General Conference; an address to the public was drawn up; and a committee named to draft a constitution. Failing to accomplish their wish at the General Conference, a third convention was held in Baltimore on November 2, 1830. There were eighty-three delegates present, and the Methodist Protestant Church was organized. At the first Gen-



eral Conference of the new Church, held in Baltimore, May 6, 1834, seventeen preachers and fourteen lay delegates were in attendance. Ten Conferences were represented and the record for the quadrennium showed fourteen Conferences with 26,587 members.<sup>15</sup> It is probable that the membership had been drawn largely from the ranks of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

A development which belongs to this period was the organization of the Methodist Sunday School Society, chartered April 1, 1827. This organization resulted partly from the need for a more direct and authoritative control than could be secured through the American Sunday School Union; but it was in part due, no doubt, to the spirit of denominational controversy developing at that time. The Episcopalians were not affiliated with the Union, and an interdenominational organization could not long adapt itself to the sharp differences of those who were arrayed in doctrinal contests. During this period, Methodism lost two of its most distinguished and useful pioneer preachers. On March 10, 1826, Philip Bruce died in Giles County, Tennessee; and on September 26, 1827, Freeborn Garrettson, the Paul Revere of Methodism, died in New York City. These were practically the last of the pioneers. They lived to see the Church a mighty religious army of nearly four hundred thousand members, covering the entire land from the Atlantic seaboard to the remotest settlement in the far West and from the warm and genial South to far away Canada.

The second General Conference to be held outside the city of Baltimore convened in Pittsburg, May 1, 1828. The session was not notable for its legislative achievements; but was largely occupied with controversies that were ending and the consideration of ques-

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<sup>15</sup> *History of the Methodist Protestant Church*, Williams, pp. 120ff, 229ff, 324, 327.



tions leading to issues for future settlement. As has been said already, the "suspended resolutions" regarding the election of presiding elders were rescinded by this Conference. A motion was made to reenact the same legislation, but it failed to carry. Bishop Hedding made complaint on account of slanderous misrepresentations of an address which he made before the Pittsburg Conference. The article complained of appeared in the *Mutual Rights* publication of the Reformers, and the complaint was sustained by the report of the Committee on Episcopacy. The convictions of Dennis P. Dorsey, William C. Pool and others, appealed to this Conference, were affirmed; and an agreement was reached which terminated our connectional relation with Canada. The Conference was troubled with agitations and petitions, mostly from the Genesee and New England Conferences, on the subject of "Speculative Freemasonry." The same subject was brought to the attention of the Conference of 1832 in petitions against "secret societies;" but in both instances the Conference declined to take action. One exceptional measure had for its purpose the making stable and continuous the work of Methodism in New Orleans. The frequent scourges of yellow fever made it difficult to maintain an effective ministry under the two-year tenure, and a law was made excepting the City from the operation of the rule. This exception was not removed until the General Conference of the Southern Church in 1870.

The period following the General Conference was one of agitation and controversy. The whole system of Methodist church government was attacked. Charges were made that Mr. Wesley and Adam Clarke had done violence to the Scriptures by a species of Biblical criticism calculated to destroy the authority of the Word of God. All this has a familiar sound to modern ears,

but the names of Mr. Wesley and Adam Clarke no longer head the list of critics. At Augusta, Georgia, in January 1827, Bishop Soule preached a "masterly sermon on the Perfect Law of Liberty." In obedience to a resolution of the South Carolina Conference, the sermon was published. "When it appeared in print, it was reviewed in a series of articles written by a Presbyterian minister of some parts, and published in the *Charleston Observer*."<sup>16</sup> The charge of heresy which he brought against Bishop Soule was denunciatory, but poorly maintained and it ended as tirades usually do—Bishop Soule was exonerated and his critic forgotten. Despite the spirit of agitation, this was a period of solid growth. Thirty-eight thousand members were ceded to Canada, but there was a gain of more than one hundred and thirty-one thousand members during the four years. Even the agitations of the Reformers and the formation of the Methodist Protestant Church made no serious impact upon Methodist progress.

The General Conference of 1832 met in Philadelphia, May 1. Its great work relates to missions which we discuss in the next chapter. The temperance question was dealt with in a labored but vigorous report by Dr. Bascom. A resolution was passed to change the Restrictive Rule so that a minority in a single Conference might not defeat the will of the entire Church. A Book Depository was established in New Orleans, with William M. Curtis as agent. Last, but not the least important act, James Osgood Andrew and John Emory were elected bishops. They were both elected on the first ballot, Bishop Andrew receiving 140 votes and Bishop Emory 135 votes, the vote determining the order of their election.

An effort was made to establish a branch of the Book Concern in Nashville, Tennessee, but it was un-

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<sup>16</sup> *Life of William Capers*, Wightman, pp. 254, 255.

successful. Another interesting proposal was embodied in a resolution offered by certain brethren from Philadelphia "on the subject of our preachers receiving the honorary title of Doctor of Divinity." *Mirabile dictu!* On motion the resolution was referred to a special committee of five. The Journal gives no intimation as to whether their report was favorable or unfavorable to the resolution; but it was warmly debated and, after several unsuccessful parliamentary moves to suppress the matter, it was finally tabled. So the liberty of the colleges was not invaded, the pride of the preachers was saved, and they were left to "pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope."

The Church suffered sore bereavement in 1835 in the loss of its venerable and beloved senior Bishop and its faithful and promising junior Bishop. Bishop McKendree had long been in feeble health; he preached his last sermon in Nashville, Tennessee, November 22, 1834; and died March 5, 1835. He had been a bishop since 1808; and with the exception of Joshua Soule, he did more than any other man to shape and steady the Church under its new constitution. Bishop Emory, who lived on a farm near Baltimore, left home in a light carriage on the morning of December 16, 1835. No one knows what happened, but it is supposed that the horse ran away with the vehicle and threw the Bishop out. He was found later in the day in an unconscious condition, and he died that same evening without regaining consciousness. The death of Bishop McKendree meant the removing of another of the landmarks of Methodist progress; but the untimely going of Bishop Emory meant a great subtraction from the effective leadership of the Church.

On February 18, 1836, the Church suffered a great loss in the fire which destroyed the Book Concern in New York. It entailed a property loss of practically a



quarter of a million dollars; but the insurance supplemented by the response of the church more than replaced the monetary disaster. The greatest loss was in the burning of documents and manuscript journals of the early preachers. Among these was the manuscript journal of Jesse Lee which was valuable source material of early Methodist history. New machinery was soon installed and a greater Book Concern was reared upon the cinder-smitten ruins; but there could be no recovery from the loss of those recordings of pioneer preachers who had gone to their eternal rest.

When the General Conference met in Cincinnati, May 2, 1836, its attention was given in great measure to the slavery agitations which we shall discuss in the chapter devoted to that subject. There was a flood of memorials on the subject of temperance. Liberia was raised to the status of a mission Conference, and the establishment of a mission in France was considered. Beverly Waugh, Thomas A. Morris, and Wilbur Fisk were elected bishops. Dr. Fisk, who was in England as delegate to the British Conference, declined to accept the office, preferring to remain as president of Wesleyan University; but probably feeling also the pressure of failing health. He died February 22, 1838. The appeal cases brought up from the Annual Conferences were numerous, and a Judiciary Committee was raised to bring them forward in orderly form. An effort was put forth to remove the term "catholic" from the Apostles' Creed as inserted in the Discipline, but it failed to receive the sanction of the Conference.

Following this Conference, the Church, North, passed through a period of great agitation on the subject of slavery, and it made a determined stand against the disrupting tendencies growing out of the discussion. An event of significance to world-wide Methodism was the Centennial celebration of 1839. At this



time ecumenical Methodism had 1,171,000 members, and they expressed their gratitude to God in gifts totaling nearly one and three-quarter millions of dollars. In another five years, ten million sons and daughters of Wesley will celebrate the second centennial of Methodist history. In April, 1838, a great conflagration seriously crippled the operations of the Methodists in Charleston, South Carolina. In addition to the property losses of the people, four Methodist churches were destroyed.

When the General Conference assembled in Baltimore, May 1, 1840, the bitterness of the struggle that had been waged in the Annual Conferences was revealed in a flood of petitions from New England, appealing for a Moderate Episcopacy, elective presiding elders, and lay representation in the General and Annual Conferences. Bishop Hedding made complaint against some of his Conferences, but the differences were adjusted and the complaints withdrawn. The petitions addressed to this Conference were apparently a spontaneous outburst on the part of the rank and file of the church. A Special Committee on lay delegations, moderate episcopacy, and elective presiding elders made a report which was presented by William Winans of Mississippi. The report held that the petitions were the product of a single mind, and had the appearance of "*agitation*" rather than "*original dissatisfaction*," and were, therefore, not entitled to consideration as spontaneous expressions of the memorialists. The report concluded with a resolution to the effect that it was not best to change the Discipline or form of government on any of the matters suggested.<sup>17</sup> The American Anti-slavery Society had adopted the policy of sending petitions in order to overwhelm Congress on the subject of slavery and they

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<sup>17</sup> *Journal of the General Conference*, 1840, pp. 71, 72.

were sent without effort to disguise their common origin. The petitions to the General Conference constituted the Methodist phase of the policy originated by those seeking the emancipation of the slaves.

The next four years were taken up with the slavery controversy, and the church was rapidly moving toward the calamity of 1844. Orange Scott, LeRoy Sunderland, Lucius C. Matlack and others were disappointed in the failure of their efforts to capture the General Conference for the abolition cause, and they became bitter in their denunciation and revolutionary in their planning. At a convention held in Utica, New York, May 31, 1843, the dissatisfied group of the Methodist Episcopal Church coalesced with other factions in the formation of the "Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America. The body retained the doctrines of Methodism; but eliminated the episcopacy and adopted the English form of administration. The rule on slavery was so changed as to prohibit unconditionally the purchase, sale or ownership of a slave. Like the Methodist Protestant Church, it introduced lay representation into both the General and Annual Conferences; and the new Church took a very advanced position on the subject of temperance. At the Utica Convention, six thousand members were reported to have adhered, and it is probable that a very large part of them were from the Methodist Episcopal Church. At the first General Conference held eighteen months later, the total membership of the Connection was reported as fifteen thousand. On October 20, 1840, Nelson Reed, who was in his eighty-ninth year, died. He had been twenty years a superannuate, and at the time of his death he was the oldest Methodist preacher in Europe or America.

At this point, we turn back in order that we may make a connected study of some distinct interests and

problems of Methodist history. First, we consider the missionary and the educational development, and the origin and progress of the church press. Then we take up the very complicated and difficult story of the slavery issue which began with the church in 1784; grew with an increasing ratio of importance through the years; and ended in the catastrophe of 1844, when two branches of episcopal Methodism with a common history and a common ecclesiastical inheritance, but with irreconcilable social and racial ideals and interests, and a divergent ecclesiastical theory, set up rival camps the one against the other. And all this was but the prelude to a great war and to a breach of ecclesiastical and fraternal relations which one hundred years have not been sufficient to heal.





## CHAPTER VI

### MISSIONS, EDUCATION, THE PRESS

THE study of certain special interests in the making of Methodism had been deferred to this point in order that they might be given connected presentation. To give the development step by step in the history of the church, would fail to convey an adequate idea of their place and contribution as factors of Methodist progress. Although these interests were perfectly co-ordinated in the building of our denominational life, each has a romance peculiarly its own. In this chapter, notice will be taken of the work and the institutions originating before 1844. Other work belonging to the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, will be discussed in a later chapter.

As we have already said, the primary thought of the preachers composing the Christmas Conference was to provide a ministry for the Methodist societies; but they determined to undertake mission and education enterprises as well, and they immediately set themselves to the work of carrying out both of those resolves. In both undertakings, however, their spirit was much more impressive than their achievements; for the time had not come, either socially or economically, for the commanding success which those interests ultimately attained. As for the church press, the use of print as a means of furthering the movement in America was not employed for many years, and it received no recognition whatever in the plans of the organization Conference of 1784. It was not adopted until conflict and opposition had become so stubborn

and determined as to make publicity a necessary factor in the offensive and defensive warfare of the militant Methodists. With this brief review of general conditions, we pass to the consideration of the factors themselves.

The first missionary object to engage the attention of the Methodists was the American Indian. Some effort on his behalf was put forth at an early period. As early as the middle of the seventeenth century Thomas Mayhew, Jr., and John Eliot did mission work among the Indians of New England, and about one hundred years later David Brainerd made his contribution to the work; but no effective and consistent work was established for Indian evangelization until after the organization of the great denominational Missionary Societies, early in the nineteenth century. The Missionary and Bible Society of the Methodist Church was organized in New York in 1819, and it was adopted as a church-wide institution by the General Conference of 1820. Immediately following the adjournment, the newly established Society turned its attention to the work outlined in the Address sent out by the managers the year before. The independent mission, which John Stewart, a Negro preacher, established among the Wyandots, had been adopted by the Ohio Conference in 1819, and it was taken over by the Missionary Society in 1820. Missions were established among the Indians of Tennessee and Kentucky in 1821; William Capers was appointed to open missions among the Creeks of Alabama and Georgia in 1822; and stations were opened for the Mohawks and others in 1823. These missions to the Indians were rapidly expanded and soon included the Cherokees, Choctaws, Oneidas, Shawnees, Senecas, and even the Flat Heads in far away Oregon were not overlooked. Jason and Daniel Lee were sent to that region in 1834. In 1844, the year





MELVILLE B. COX

Missionary to Africa and first Foreign Missionary of  
the American Methodist Church



in which the Church was divided, the Indian Mission Conference was organized. This Conference adhered to the Southern Church, and in 1846 the report showed 22 missions, 32 missionaries, 9 churches, and 3,404 members.

Another object listed in the Address of 1819 was the French in Louisiana. The population of this section, which was originally settled by emigrants from France and Spain, was overwhelmingly Roman Catholic; and no field ever offered greater resistance to Protestant approach or made poorer response to the efforts of the missionary. In 1805 Elisha Bowman was sent to Louisiana. The Minutes give his appointment as Opelousas, but in a letter written to William Burke of Kentucky, January 29, 1806, he says that he went first to New Orleans and failing to gain an entrance to the city, he left for Opelousas, on December 17, 1805. New Orleans does not appear in the Minutes as an appointment until 1811, when Miles Harper was sent. His success was not greater than had been that of Bowman six years before, and at the Conference of 1812 Lewis Hobbs was assigned to the city. He was ill unto death, but he made another vain effort to secure a footing for the Methodists. At the Mississippi Conference held in November 1813, William Winans was appointed to New Orleans. The name of the city then disappears from the Minutes until the Conference, October 29, 1818, which sent Mark Moore as "Missionary to New Orleans." He was followed the next year by John Menefee who had been presiding elder of the Louisiana District. Menefee had an attack of yellow fever in 1820 and he located at the Conference of that year. Ebenezer Brown of the New York Conference was then assigned to New Orleans. He came with a supply of Bibles and Testaments in French and Spanish, furnished by the American Bible Society; but after a

year of fruitless effort he returned to his home Conference, and New Orleans again disappears from the Minutes. It is said that its abandonment was seriously considered and, but for the earnest pleading of Ashley Hewit, presiding elder of the Louisiana District, it might have been dropped. In December, 1823, the effort in behalf of the city was renewed by the appointment of Daniel Hall as missionary with William Winans, presiding elder. The next year Benjamin M. Drake was sent, and with his administration the first signs of progress appeared. He reported for the first year 23 white and 60 colored members. The mission was not taken into the regular work of the Missionary Society, however, until 1828.

In 1820 there were probably only two Protestant church houses in New Orleans, a city of thirty-five thousand people, and one of them was owned by the Presbyterians. In 1818 Rev. Thomas Griffin, presiding elder of the Mississippi District, circulated in Adams and Franklin Counties of Mississippi, an appeal for help to build a Methodist church in New Orleans. The appeal was signed by John Pray, Alfred Soucier, and James N. Hyde; and on the reverse side was a subscription list containing the names of eighteen planters who pledged the sum of \$276. But the first building was not completed for occupancy until 1826. Securing a meeting house was only one of the many obstacles which the Methodists encountered in New Orleans, and the slow growth of the church indicates the difficulty. Only 75 white and 570 colored members were reported to the Conference in December, 1838, and those figures represent a continuous effort over a period of fifteen years. But Methodism had at last secured a foothold in Louisiana and there were no more lapses. The Louisiana Conference was organized in 1846, by authority of the first General Con-

ference of the Southern Church; and in 1860, the field that had so stubbornly resisted Methodist aggression took a place in the front rank for ministerial support and missionary offerings.

The work among the French and Spanish was extended eastward along the coast of Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. In December, 1824, Henry P. Cook was sent to begin work in Mobile and Pensacola, but the following year he fell a victim of yellow fever. He was succeeded by John R. Lambuth, a name destined to become famous in missionary enterprises around the world. He was the father of J. W. Lambuth of Mississippi, whose missionary ministry played so large a part in the Methodist history of China and Japan; and he was the grandfather of that princely leader and bishop of the church—Walter R. Lambuth whose body sleeps on the field consecrated by the labors of his distinguished father. Another interesting focus of French and Spanish missions is St. Augustine, Florida, the oldest town in North America, and one of the most immovably Roman also. Joshua N. Glenn opened a mission there in 1823; but after more than a hundred years of continuous occupation and effort, the Methodist Church has fewer than three hundred members. Such is the story of the heroic toil and sacrifice of the men who helped to win a place for Methodism among a people born and bred to Roman tradition and a hierarchy of priestly dominion.

The next missionary adventure of the Church was directed towards Africa, the Dark Continent, the toil of whose teeming millions has enriched all lands except their own. The social and spiritual destitution of the black-skinned tribes of the vast jungles was known to all Christian lands, but no great enthusiasm had been anywhere developed for their evangelization. Here we come again upon the missionary trail of the im-



mortal Dr. Coke. In 1795 he sent a colony of farmers and mechanics to the region of the "Fulahs" on the Senegal River; but no preacher was sent, and he reported to the British Conference of 1796 that the colony had failed. At that same Conference, Archibald Murdock and William Patton were assigned to Africa, but there is no evidence that they went. Abel Stevens says that there is no other mention of Africa until 1811 when missionaries were sent to Serra Leone. It was contemplated, he thinks, that they would organize work among the natives, but they seem either to have confined their work to the English settlements, or to have had small success in their missionary endeavor.

The General Conference of 1828 recommended the opening of a mission in Liberia on the west coast of Africa. This was a colony founded in 1816, as a haven for Negroes who might not enjoy the privileges of citizenship in the United States. The Bishops were not able to find a suitable man for the perilous and responsible task until the Conference of 1832, when the recommendation was renewed. In a private conversation with Bishop Hedding, Melville B. Cox, of Virginia, offered to go to South America for the mission proposed there; but the Bishop proposed instead the mission to Africa. Cox wrote Bishop Hedding from Norfolk, Virginia, February 22, 1832, giving his consent to the undertaking, should the Bishops be pleased to accept him. Within a month after the adjournment of the General Conference, he received his commission which reads:

"New York, June 22, 1832.

"DEAR BROTHER:—As you have been appointed a Superintendent of the Mission to Liberia, it is your duty to enter upon said mission with all convenient and possible dispatch, to take the oversight of the people within the bounds of your mission, to do your ut-



most to promote the cause of God, by preaching, visiting from house to house, establishing schools, instructing the children, and doing all the duties peculiar to a Methodist preacher, as the Discipline directs. It is your duty also to make quarterly reports to the managers of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

"Wishing you the blessings of God on your labors, we remain affectionately yours,

"R. R. ROBERTS,  
"ELIJAH HEDDING."

Melville Cox was a man of tragic experiences, he was appointed to a continent with a tragic history, and his life was made radiant by the pathos of his tragic death. He was born in Hallowell, Maine, November 9, 1799; preached his first sermon at Readfield, December 17, 1820; was licensed to preach by the Kennebeck District in March, 1821; and he joined the Conference at Bath in 1822, when he was assigned to Exeter circuit. In 1825 he broke down with lung trouble; was a superannuate for two years; and located in 1828. He then went to Baltimore where he was married to "Ellen, the daughter of Mrs. Cromwell Lee," February 7, 1828. On December 31, 1829, his wife died, and on June 21, 1830, Martha, his little daughter died also and he was left alone. Cox described the year as a "moonless night" in his life, and such it certainly was, for he lost three brothers-in-law in addition to his wife and child. He was readmitted at the session of the Virginia Conference which met at Newbern, and was assigned to Raleigh, North Carolina. It was a year of severe trial both for the pastor and his people, as he was ill almost the entire year. It is likely that he was appreciated more for his saintliness and suffering than for any service that he was able to render. He sailed for Africa on November 6, 1832; landed in Liberia

March 8, 1833; and his time was occupied with incessant activities until he was stricken with African fever, April 12. He died on Sunday, July 21, and his immortal epitaph, "Africa must be redeemed, though thousands perish," has been the missionary inspiration of a hundred years. His faith and resignation are recorded in words which he penned as he looked toward the far away shores of Africa: "If I am hungry, Elijah's God will feed me; if I die—*alone*—the God of Moses will take care of my body till the resurrection, and take my soul to himself." His tenderness and fervor come out in the beautiful words of a last letter to his mother, written exactly one week before he was stricken unto death:

"I can scarcely realize, my dear mother, that I am five or six thousand miles from you. But we shall meet by and by. Neither of us can be here for a long while. God grant that we may meet in heaven. I have a most pleasant assurance that I am on my way there. Indeed, I have never in my life felt such divine support from grace as since I left home. My cup has been full, never empty. Give yourself no care for me, except to pray for my success in my mission, and the perfection of my nature in the spirit and practice of the gospel."<sup>1</sup>

When Rufus Spaulding and Samuel O. Wright, with their wives and Miss Sophronia Farrington, reached Liberia on January 1, 1834, they found the Liberian Mission established, but Melville Cox had answered the summons from the skies. Within two months, Mrs. Wright died of the fever and a little later her husband followed. Spaulding and his wife were so reduced by the plague that they were compelled to return to the United States. This left only Miss Farrington who chose to remain alone rather than give Africa up, for

<sup>1</sup> See *Remain of Melville B. Cox.*

she said that she had "offered her soul upon the altar of her God, for the salvation of that long benighted continent." Many have been the casualties on that desperate field, but the light abides even until now.

Following the recommendation of the General Conference Bishop Andrew, on behalf of the College of Bishops, appointed Fountain E. Pitts of the Tennessee Conference to make a tour of inspection preparatory to opening work in South America. Pitts left in July, 1835, and visited Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Montevideo and other places, and upon the invitation of the General Conference of 1836 he made a personal report of his tour. On March 22, 1836, Justin Spaulding of the Maine Conference sailed for Rio de Janeiro to begin work there; and on November 12, 1837, Daniel P. Kidder of the Genesee Conference and Rev. R. McMurdy and wife were sent to re-enforce Spaulding. On October 14, 1836, John Dempster sailed for Buenos Aires, having been appointed to open work in that city. He made an auspicious beginning and large plans were laid by the Missionary Society to take care of the work. He visited Montevideo in 1838 and recommended that a minister-teacher be sent to occupy that point. Accordingly Rev. William H. Norris was appointed. The unsettled state of the country, the blockade by the French and the intolerance of the Roman Church made this an extremely difficult field, and the progress of the work was much hindered. The appropriation for the church building in Buenos Aires was recalled, and Dempster pursued the slower policy of creating an educational background for the work. But in 1841 the response had been so small and the difficulties of the field so great that the missionaries were withdrawn. The withdrawal of the missionaries brought an appeal for the restoration of the work in Buenos Aires, and in response to the petition, Rev.



William H. Norris, formerly of Montevideo, was appointed to reopen the work.<sup>2</sup>

Another phase of mission work relates to the German people who came to America among the early settlers. By a strange coincidence, the Methodists seem to have been slow to appreciate the need for work on their behalf. Bishop Asbury was often among them, particularly in the "beautiful Wyoming" country of Pennsylvania; but he seems to have made no move for their evangelization as a people. It is true that some of the Methodist preachers could speak German, and there was an occasional sermon in that language; but no planned and continuous ministry to them. So the people who were entitled to credit for the intellectual renaissance which saved the world from a despotism of dogma and superstition were seemingly overlooked in the early missionary and evangelistic plans of the Methodists. This neglect lost to the Church the chance for religious leadership among the Germans, as they turned to the United Brethren of Christ Church and to the Evangelical Alliance with whose founders they had a racial tie.

No systematic effort in behalf of the Germans was undertaken until 1836, when William Nast was admitted on trial into the Ohio Conference and was appointed to German missions in Cincinnati. The next year he was sent to German Missions within the bounds of the Columbus District, a missionary circuit three hundred miles long with twenty-two appointments. In 1839 Dr. Nast was made editor of the *German Apologist* published in Cincinnati, and he was succeeded in the mission by Peter Schmucker. A mission to the Germans of Pennsylvania was begun in 1841, and another in New York the same year. A school was established for the Germans also. In 1843 nineteen

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<sup>2</sup> *History of the Missions of the M. E. Church*, Strickland, pp. 160-171.



missions were reported, reaching from Pittsburg to New Orleans; and in 1864 the Methodist Episcopal Church, finding the plan of conducting the German work as a fractional part of various Annual Conferences unsatisfactory and in response to the petitions of the German Methodists, set up the German Conferences.<sup>3</sup> For many years the proceedings of those Conferences were conducted and recorded in German, that being the language best understood by the people. The Germans have made valuable contribution to American Methodist history, and they have loyally supported the Church and its polity.

Still another phase of missionary expansion is presented in the beginnings of Texas Methodism. Under Mexican rule, all forms of Protestant worship were forbidden, and the Methodists found access through the "neutral ground" which was established pending the settlement of the boundary dispute between France and Spain, to which the United States became a party by the Louisiana Purchase. On the whole, the story of early Methodist preaching in Texas is rather legendary in character and is that of irregular, disconnected and unplanned effort.

It is conceded that William Stevenson is entitled to be known as the pioneer preacher of Texas Methodism, but the time of his beginning is not so well established. Stevenson's autobiography, prepared in 1840, but published after his death, seems to have been completely overlooked. It establishes conclusively the year of his beginning as 1815. He says that he moved to Tennessee, about forty miles south of Nashville, and that they handed-in their letters to Brother Lambuth, the pastor. William Lambuth was pastor of Cumberland circuit in 1800, and so we establish the time of his arrival in Tennessee. He remained nine years in Tennessee, dur-

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 180-199.

ing which time William McKendree, the presiding elder, employed him for one year as a local preacher to assist Benjamin Edge on Roaring River circuit. Again the Minutes show that to have been 1806. After a time he moved to Washington county, Missouri, where he engaged in farming. There he came in contact with Samuel Parker, the presiding elder, and David Young, the pastor. That was in 1810 and on Maramack circuit. In the fall of 1813, he says that he was visited by James Stevenson, his brother, who lived in Clark county, Arkansas; and that he prevailed upon him to go with him to Arkansas and preach to those people in the wilderness. From this visit, he returned in the dead of winter. He names all the presiding elders in their order and with absolute accuracy. In the summer of 1814, he traveled with Samuel Thompson, his presiding elder, who urged him to join the traveling ministry, and told him that he would have him entered as such, if he would agree to it. Stevenson agreed to it on the condition that he was first to fulfill his promise to pay another preaching visit to Arkansas. Some time afterward, he left for Arkansas, accompanied by Joseph Reed, a local preacher, and John Johnson, his son-in-law. He remained six months, preaching in Clark county, on the Forte Caddo and Little Missouri rivers, and he crossed the Red River into the province of Texas and formed a society in a settlement of Americans that he found at Pecan Point. When he reached home from this visit, he found that he had been admitted into the traveling ministry in his absence, and that he had been assigned to Bellevue circuit. The plan of his circuit was arranged for him when he reached home. The minutes show that the Conference, at which he was admitted and by which he was assigned to Bellevue circuit, met on October 20, 1815, and that establishes the year of his preaching in

Texas. This autobiography was prepared just twenty-five years after the events of his ministry in Texas. He gives very few dates and they are not always correct, but his references to men and appointments make it easy to correct the errors, and they place the accuracy of his story beyond question.<sup>4</sup>

In a statement, made shortly before his death, and dictated to Dr. Lawhon, Henry Stephenson gave an account of his early ministry in Texas. He said that in June, 1824, he attempted to preach at the house of a Mr. Stafford, who lived near where San Augustine now stands; but that he was refused the privilege and was threatened by the Alcalde, under the Spanish laws against holding Protestant services. He was then invited to preach at the house of Thomas Spencer, on the Aloyaque river twelve miles further west. His second sermon was at the house of James Cummings, on the Colorado river; his third at Peach Creek, in the house of a man named Jackson; his fourth and fifth at Samuel Carter's, near where Columbia now stands; his sixth at Esq. Castleman's, near San Felipe; and his seventh in San Felipe on the following day.<sup>5</sup> The time and fact of the services at Samuel Carter's were confirmed by Mrs. Mary E. Bell, a Presbyterian, who moved to that section in 1822, and who was present on that occasion.<sup>6</sup>

To these recollections of Henry Stephenson, Rev. James T. P. Irvine, a son-in-law of Col. McMahon, adds, of his own personal knowledge, that Needham J. Alford, a local preacher from Louisiana, came over and preached in 1831 or 1832; and that James Stevenson, a son of William Stevenson, came in 1833, and that he and Enoch N. Talley held a camp meeting at which

4 Autobiography Wm. Stevenson in *Christian Advocate*, N. O., March 5 to April 24, 1858.

5 James T. P. Irvine in the *Texas Christian Advocate*, April 14, 1855

6 J. H. B. in the *Texas Christian Advocate*, May 26, 1855.



Col. McMahon was converted. A class was formed with a man named Compton as leader, but it soon scattered. In 1834, Henry Stephenson came over from the Natchitoches circuit in Louisiana, and held a camp meeting at which time he organized two societies. One was at San Augustine, with Shadrach Thomas as leader, and the other at Sabine, with eight members and with Col. McMahon as leader. The latter was the beginning of what is probably the most historic church in Texas. Col. McMahon, said to have been the first man to make a profession of Christ in Texas, became a local preacher. He gave the ground for the church, and he and Littleton Fowler, who had a large share in the founding of Texas Methodism, are both buried there. Irvine's statement says, also, that in 1834, Rev. J. W. Kinney, who came to Austin county from Ohio, held a camp meeting three miles north of Center Hill.<sup>7</sup> In these statements, allowances must be made for the fact that they are recollections and cannot be substantiated by records, but they were made soon enough after the events recorded to establish a strong presumption of their accuracy.

The way was not open for the Protestant invasion of Texas until after General Sam Houston had won the independence of that vast territory by the decisive battle of San Jacinto, April 21, 1836. This event which resulted in the establishment of the Republic of Texas, was not more epochal in its change of political relations, than in the changed ecclesiastical history which followed. In 1837 John B. Denton and E. B. Duncan succeeded John H. Carr on the Sulphur Fork circuit, and the work established by Henry Stephenson in the "Red lands" was still in existence. The opening of Texas for settlement was the occasion for a forward move upon the part of the Missionary Society. At its

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<sup>7</sup> James T. P. Irvine in *The Texas Christian Advocate*, April 14, 1855.



spring meeting in 1837, steps were taken to launch an aggressive campaign in the new Republic. Martin Ruter was appointed superintendent of the Texas mission, with Littleton Fowler and Robert Alexander as his assistants. The first of these to arrive on the field was Robert Alexander. Littleton Fowler, who was joined on the way by John B. Denton, reached Nacodoches, October 16, 1837. Martin Ruter, after arranging to leave his family in Indiana, reached San Augustine, November 22, 1837. He visited Houston where he preached before the Congress of the Republic and made a profound impression. Dr. Ruter did effective work in gathering a list of those who had been Methodists before going to Texas; but his monumental service was in the vision of his planning for the future. He planned to use twelve new missionaries, and he started to the meeting of the Missionary Society to make his appeal for recruits. After he had gone about forty miles he was taken seriously ill and returned to Washington, Texas, where he died on May 16, 1838—less than six months after his arrival on the field. At the succeeding Conference, Littleton Fowler was appointed presiding elder and superintendent of the mission; and associated with him were six preachers, among whom was Abel Stevens who later became a distinguished historian of the Church. The early developments of Texas Methodism were largely the result of the vision of Martin Ruter and of the wise, tactful and capable leadership of his successor. Fowler and John Clark represented Texas in the General Conference of 1844, but Clark, having taken sides against the South, did not return to Texas. In 1845 Fowler and Robert Alexander were the representatives at the Convention which organized the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. At the time of the division of the Church, there were two Conferences in Texas, with 51 itinerant preachers, 64

local preachers, 5077 white and 1005 colored members —no mean achievement for less than eight years of organized work in a land that from time immemorial had been ruled by Romanism.<sup>8</sup>

One other distinct phase of missionary work belonging to this period of Methodist history was that undertaken on behalf of the slaves of the Southern plantations. For many reasons a missions to the slaves of the South, as a church-wide interest, was not possible; but such work was carried on by the Conferences in the slaveholding territory. The missions to the slaves originated in South Carolina. Not long after the return of William Capers from England, where he had gone as the delegate to the British Conference, Hon. Charles C. Pinckney of South Carolina sought his assistance in securing the services of a Methodist exhorter as an overseer on his plantations. The purpose of Mr. Pinckney was to secure religious instruction for his slaves. Other planters joined in the movement. Dr. Capers was not able to effect such an arrangement for them, but the incident led to the establishment of missions among the slaves in the lowlands of South Carolina. John Honour was sent to a mission among the slaves on the Ashley river; and J. H. Massey was sent to another on the Santee river. On September 19, following the appointment, John Honour died at his post among the Negroes of the plantations, a victim of "bilious fever." The number of missions to the slaves grew from year to year, and they were served by some of the best ministers of the South. Ten years after the opening of the first mission, there were twenty-seven missions served by thirty preachers. When the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was formed there was no change in the interest or policy touching the slaves; and at the death of Bishop Capers in 1855, there

<sup>8</sup> *A History of Early Methodism In Texas*, Pelan, pp. 70-238; See also *A Brief History of Methodism In Texas*, Thrall.

were twenty-six of these missions in South Carolina alone, and others were maintained in practically every Conference of the South.

When the suggestion was made which led to the founding of missions to the slaves, Dr. Capers was a presiding elder, and he had long been interested in the plantation Negroes. He prepared two catechisms specially for their use; and his interest in their welfare continued to the end of his life. On one face of the modest shaft which marks his resting place, is the well deserved tribute: "Founder of missions to the slaves of South Carolina." The art of Charles Dickens gave fame and a literary immortality to "Little Dorrit," "Little Nell," and others of God's *neglected* children. The soul and consecration of William Capers brought fame and a higher order of immortality to "Henry Evans," "Father Castile Selby," "John Bouquet," "Will Campbell," "Harry Myrick," "York Cohen," "Maum Rachael Wells," and a host of *black* children whose names, though not recorded here, are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.<sup>9</sup>

The next important factor in the history of Methodist progress was education. The oft repeated saying: "Methodism was born in a university," ministers to church vanity and conceit more than to educational information. To be sure, Mr. Wesley was a university man, and the Oxford Holy Club is a legitimate part of Methodist history; but Mr. Wesley had no theory of education, and such did not greatly concern him—an attitude common to his time. He was an exponent of the methods of the Epworth rectory, and the schools which he established scarcely varied from the daily regimen of his parental home. And after all, school to him was just another evangelistic agency. In America the evangelism of the Wesleyan Revival dominated

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<sup>9</sup> *Life of William Capers*, Wightman, pp. 124, 291-297, 309-312, 391-394.



the movement for almost half a century. At the close of the Revolution the Methodist societies numbered approximately fifteen thousand members, but the ministry had not a single college graduate in the list, nor was there a Methodist college in America. With the exception of Doctor Thomas Coke, there was not a college graduate in the Methodist ministry until 1818 when Wilbur Fisk, a graduate of the University of Vermont, was admitted into the New England Conference. This statement must not be taken as an indictment of the Methodists alone; it is equally a commentary upon the economic, the social and the cultural condition of the time.

Doctor Thomas Coke wrote an educational commitment into the very charter of American Methodism by the projection of Cokesbury College, at the moment when the church was in process of organization. The problem of the early educational efforts was well stated by Devereaux Jarratt in his rather blunt comment upon the failure of Cokesbury. He said: "I see not how any considerate man could expect any great things from a seminary of learning, while under the supreme direction and control of tinkers and taylors, weavers, shoemakers, and country mechanics of all kinds—or, in other words, of men illiterate and wholly unacquainted with colleges and their contents."<sup>10</sup> But the very effort to establish an institution of learning and a network of district academies is proof of Methodist interest in education; and it will be to the eternal credit of the pioneer preachers that an educational devotion was echoed upon the furthest frontier of the church. The cultural progress of the American people is well indicated by a pronouncement in the Texas Declaration of Independence, dated March 2, 1836. It says of the Mexican government: "It has failed to establish any public system of education, although pos-

<sup>10</sup> *The Life of Devereaux Jarratt*, p. 181.



sessed of almost boundless resources, and although it is an axiom of political science that, unless a people are educated and enlightened, it is idle to expect the continuance of civil liberty, or the capacity for self-government."<sup>11</sup> At an early day, the sentiment of this historic political document found hospitality among the Methodists.

The failure of Cokesbury College and the system of district schools enterprised by Asbury terminated the first phase of the effort for the promotion of education in the new Church. The real beginning of the second phase of effort was preceded by the founding of a few widely scattered institutions. Probably the most important of these were Wesleyan Academy, New Market, New Hampshire, and Elizabeth Female Academy, Washington, Mississippi, both established in 1818; and Wesleyan Seminary, New York City, founded in 1819. The founding of these schools has been mentioned already, but we give a more extended account of Elizabeth Female Academy. The Academy, the gift of Mrs. Elizabeth Roach to the Mississippi Conference in 1818, was chartered February 17, 1819. Its doors were opened for students on November 12, 1818, with Chilion F. Stiles, a layman, as president. The clergymen who served as presidents of the Institution were John C. Burruss, B. M. Drake, J. P. Thomas, Bradford Frazee and R. D. Smith. The Academy had a career of varying fortune covering a period of twenty-seven years. The late Judge Edward Mayes of Mississippi, prepared for Bishop Galloway a comparative study of various institutions as to the time of their organization and the type of work done. Among other things, he listed in parallel columns the courses of study for Elizabeth Female Academy in 1827, and Georgia Female College in 1839. At the conclusion of the comparison, he says:

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Ms. Address of Dr. C. C. Selecman, Southern Methodist University.

"So you will see that the curriculum of the Elizabeth Academy in 1827 at the latest, embraced everything taught at the Georgia Female College twelve years later, and Latin, Belles Letters, Political Science and Mathematics, besides—also Map Drawing, Study of Bible, Mineralogy and probably a deeper study of Chemistry."<sup>12</sup> These facts were taken from the catalogues of the colleges, which were then in the library of Judge Mayes. The opponents of Elizabeth Academy's claim to priority in the field of female education have said that the school was not called a college, and that the charter did not specifically give the right to confer degrees. Judge Mayes answers that, "academy," "college," and "university" were used interchangeably in that day; and that the power to confer degrees was *presumed* in the charters of educational institutions in Mississippi, even the State institutions of a much later date. The papers of Mississippi carried an account of the commencement of the Academy which began August 21, 1829, in which the names of six graduates and almost a score of honor students are given. *The Mississippi Christian Herald* for January 28, 1837, contains a notice which indicates that the vigor of Dr. Bradford Frazee's administration gave promise of extended and larger usefulness for the Institution; but the removal of the State capital from Washington to Jackson, the recurrence of yellow fever epidemics, and the shifting of the center of population made inevitable and inescapable the suspension of the Academy. But probably no school of that day deserves greater credit for its contribution to the life and character of the people than does Elizabeth Female Academy.<sup>13</sup>

As we enter upon the study of the second phase of the cultural development of the church, we digress for

<sup>12</sup> Letter of Judge Edward Mayes to Bishop Galloway, April 23, 1890.

<sup>13</sup> *Mississippi Historical Society Publications*, Riley, Vol. II., pp. 169-178.

a moment to disclaim any partisan interest in controversies which have arisen over questions of priority in the establishment of either schools or periodicals. To be sure, the historian is expected to locate events with some degree of accuracy; but such obligation does not necessarily include the adjudication of priority claims. The designation of schools as seminaries, colleges and universities; mergers, temporary lapses, and charter changes in both schools and periodicals, all have tended to introduce confusion and to become the occasion for contests which can not be adequately treated in a general history of the church. And, after all, mere priority probably bulks larger in the thinking of local communities and constituencies than in Methodist history as a whole. The chief interest of the historian is the movement, not a mere incident or fraction of it. We shall endeavor to present the facts regarding educational and publishing enterprises in such a manner as to reveal the cultural march of the church, rather than to gratify the ambition of any who would exalt a location or a particular enterprise. We will then try to indicate the social, civic and religious contributions made by the various institutions, and that will be the scope of our study. The first college to be organized under the impulse of the legislation of 1820 was Augusta College, Kentucky, in 1822. It did a great service for almost a quarter of a century; it was suspended when Transylvania University was organized; was later reopened; and the border troubles following the division of the church in 1844 caused it to be finally abandoned. Madison College, Uniontown, Pennsylvania, opened in 1826 and was incorporated in 1827; but its existence was of short duration and it was absorbed into an institution more advantageously located. Cazenovia Seminary, Cazenovia, New York, was opened December 11, 1824, and was incorporated as the Seminary of the

Genesee Conference, April 6, 1825. Its name has been changed by charter amendment four times; but the Institution has rendered a continuous and praiseworthy service to the church and to the nation for 110 years. It numbers among its alumni six bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church; one territorial and three state governors; and many others including Charles Dudley Warner, Philo and Eliphalet Remington, and Philip Armour. One of the oldest Methodist schools is McKendree College located at Lebanon, Illinois. The school was first called Lebanon Seminary; was organized February 20, 1828; and was opened for students on November 24, of the same year. Bishop McKendree donated 480 acres of land to the school, the name was changed to McKendree College and a charter was secured in 1835. It has had a continuous history on the same campus since 1828. and it has been co-educational since 1869.

Probably the most outstanding Methodist institution of this period is Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut. In 1824, Captain Alden Partridge, a West Point graduate, decided to move his American Literary, Scientific and Military Academy from Norwich, Vermont, to Middletown. Three trustees, John Hinsdale, Elijah Hubbard, and John Alsop purchased an eligible site on High Street, and a charter was secured in May, 1825. Some brown-stone buildings were erected and the Academy opened August 22, 1825, with a faculty of 19 and a corps of 200 cadets. Two years later Captain Partridge petitioned the General Assembly of Connecticut for the right to confer degrees, and the privilege of raising the sum of \$40,000.00 by lottery; but after two years of waiting the petition was withdrawn, and the Academy was moved back to Norwich in 1829. Two of the faculty continued a small school at Middletown, but the trustees and people were



much disappointed in the defeat of their hopes for building a great institution. At the opportune moment, Dr. Laban Clark, presiding elder of the New Haven District, came to Middletown on his official rounds; and a proposition was made to transfer the plant to the New York, the New England, and the New Hampshire and Vermont Conferences. The details of the transfer were finally agreed upon, and a preparatory school was opened October 6, 1830. A charter was secured May 21, 1831, and Wesleyan University opened on September 21, following. Among the four thousand graduates of the university have been men distinguished in all walks of life. Eleven bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church and John C. Keener and Eugene R. Hendrix, bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, are among the number. Dr. Wilbur Fisk, the first president of Wesleyan University, sent a last message to the New York Conference: "I give it as my dying request that they nurse Wesleyan University, they must exert themselves to sustain it and carry it forward." In 1832 the New York Conference petitioned the General Conference to take over the University, subject to the approval of the other patronizing Conferences, but it was not done.<sup>14</sup>

Two important ventures in early Methodist educational history were Dickinson College and Allegheny College. Dickinson College, located at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, was founded in 1783, and was opened for students the following year. It appears to have been intended for an undenominational college; but at an early stage in its history, the Presbyterian Church acquired control of it and retained the management for nearly fifty years. But internal difficulties and dissensions in its management led to its transfer to the Methodists. Negotiations for the transfer of the College

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<sup>14</sup> *Wesleyan's First Century*, Price, pp. 19-32, 58, 233-243.

are recorded in the minutes of the Baltimore Conference for the years 1825 and 1826;<sup>15</sup> and it was transferred in 1833 and came under the auspices of the Baltimore and Philadelphia Conferences. Among the alumni of the College were President Buchanan, Chief Justice Taney of the United States Supreme Court, Justices Gibson and Grier, and six bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania, was founded in 1815 as Allegheny Seminary; was opened July 4, 1816; and was chartered March 24, 1817. Like Dickinson College, it was originally under Presbyterian management; but it came under the patronage of the Pittsburgh Conference of the Methodist Church in 1833, when the name was changed to Allegheny College. The Institution has a great library of old and rare books, and through its alumni it is known around the world. Numbered among its graduates are President McKinley; six bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, including J. M. Thoburn and William F. Oldham; more than a score of distinguished missionaries; and many others—writers, college presidents, and business executives. Indiana Asbury University, now DePauw, began as a preparatory school in 1836; it was raised to collegiate rank in 1838; and the name was changed to DePauw University in 1884, in honor of Washington C. DePauw who was its greatest benefactor. Among its distinguished alumni, was Major Reuben Webster Millsaps, the founder of Millsaps College, Jackson, Mississippi. These are the older and more important schools of the North.

One of the earliest colleges in the South, established under the legislation of 1820, was LaGrange College in Alabama. At its session in 1826, the Tennessee Conference appointed a commission to select a site for a

<sup>15</sup> *History of the Old Baltimore Conference*, Armstrong, pp. 219 223, 235, 238.

school. The next year the Conference met at Tusculumbia, Alabama, and the commission recommended LaGrange, a town about fifteen miles distant from the seat of the Conference. The school opened in 1830 with Dr. Robert Paine as president. The Institution was to be literary and scientific, nonsectarian and, by an act of the Legislature of Alabama, no spirituous liquors could be sold within three miles of the campus. After a quarter of a century of splendid service, the school was moved to Florence, Alabama, and the name was changed to Florence Wesleyan University. The plant was finally turned over to the state and it is now the State Teachers' College. The imposing buildings at LaGrange were burned by Federal troops during the War Between the States.<sup>16</sup>

By date of incorporation, the oldest existing school founded by the Methodists in the South is Randolph-Macon College. The school was located at Boydton, Virginia, and the charter bears date of February 3, 1830. It was the parent of the system of colleges bearing the same name. The College was opened in January, 1832, and notwithstanding the desperate struggle occasioned by war and financial embarrassments, it has rendered a great service to the people of Virginia and the surrounding states. Randolph-Macon Academy at Bedford, Virginia, was established in 1890, and that at Front Royal in 1892. Randolph-Macon Woman's College, at Lynchburg, was founded in 1893, and a school for girls, established at Danville in 1897, was continued until 1930.

Two Georgia institutions belong to this period. In 1836 the Georgia Conference resolved to organize Emory College, and it took over the Manual Labor School which had been incorporated December 18, 1834. Emory College, Oxford, Georgia, was chartered Feb-

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<sup>16</sup> *Alabama Christian Advocate*, October 4, 1934.



ruary 6, 1837; but class work did not begin until September, 1838. The College was transferred to Atlanta, and became a part of Emory University, under the charter of January 25, 1915; and the old plant at Oxford is maintained as a Junior College of the University. The other Georgia school belonging to this period is now known as Wesleyan College and is located near Macon, Georgia. The Georgia Female College, an independent enterprise, was incorporated December 23, 1836, but was not opened until January 7, 1839. Under an act of the Legislature approved December 19, 1843, the property was accepted by the Georgia Conference and the name changed to Wesleyan Female College. This College claims the distinction of having conferred the first degree ever conferred upon a woman by a chartered institution. The degree was conferred upon Miss Catherine E. Brewer, July 16, 1840. In this school, the Soong sisters were educated: Mrs. Sun Yat Sen, wife of the first president of the Chinese Republic; Mrs. Chiang Kai Chek, wife of the president and famous General of China; and Mrs. H. H. Kung, wife of the Finance Minister of China. Wesleyan College has, therefore, a large place in the history of the new China as well as in the educational history of the Southland.

Another prominent Virginia school was located at Emory and was incorporated as Emory and Henry College, March 25, 1839. The corner stone was laid on September 30, 1836, and the school opened for work, April 2, 1838. As respects endowment and material equipment, it has not become as great as some others; but it has had a continuous history and, according to its roster of graduates, it has done a splendid service in a wide field for both religion and education. The next Methodist College, by date of incorporation, was in Texas. In his last letter to the Missionary Society,



Dr. Ruter said: "We have taken steps to found a college." On December 29, 1840, at the organization session of the Texas Conference, an address was sent to the President and Congress of the Texas Republic which said: "The objects of this organization are religion, morality and literature. Believing that the peace, prosperity and perpetuity of this infant republic will be secured in proportion to the prevalence of sound learning, sound morality and sound religion, it will be the aim of the Conference to promote these with energy and perseverance."<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, Ruterville Co-educational College, located at Rutersville, was opened February 1, 1840. In 1850 Rutersville College was beginning to decline and by action of the Texas Legislature in 1856, its control by the Texas Conference was dissolved. The College was then consolidated with a military academy at Galveston, and the property passed from the church.<sup>18</sup>

Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, is the successor of educational enterprises which reach back to 1835, when some citizens of Randolph county met and organized Union Institute. The school was incorporated as Union Institute Academy, January 12, 1841, and under a new charter secured ten years later the name was changed to Normal College. In 1856 a proposition was made to the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to transfer the control of the college to it. The offer was accepted and the name was changed to Trinity College in 1859. The location was changed to Durham, North Carolina, January 21, 1891, and in September, 1892, the session opened in the new location. In the latter part of 1924, Mr. James Duke executed the indenture which created the Duke endowment. The provisions of the indenture were accepted, December 30, 1924, and by charter

<sup>17</sup> Ms. Address President C. C. Selecman, Southern Methodist University.

<sup>18</sup> *History of Methodism in Texas*, Phelan, pp. 129, 130, 331ff, 400.

amendment the name was changed to Duke University. As a college, it was for many years one of the best institutions of the Southern Church; and with its recently acquired endowment, the University will doubtless hold a first place among the educational centers of the nation.

Another college with a rather varied history is Centenary College of Louisiana, located at Shreveport. It represents the amalgamation of the College of Louisiana, located at Jackson, with Centenary College, a Methodist institution founded by the Mississippi Conference, and located at Brandon Springs, sixteen miles east of Jackson, Mississippi. The College of Louisiana, a state institution, was founded in 1825, and Centenary College in 1841. The latter school was badly located and poorly supported; and in 1845 the two schools were combined and became a Methodist College at Jackson, Louisiana, in 1846. The Institution was moved to Shreveport in 1908.

Many other schools and colleges were established, but these are sufficient to show the enterprise of the Methodist Church in the second phase of its educational history. Many unwise moves were made and many institutions failed. Their failure was probably attributable in some measure to the legislative urge of the church and the haste in providing remedy for a situation which had become serious and embarrassing. As one meditates upon the educational wreckage of Methodism, there comes to mind that magnificent but melancholy show-place of Europe, the Campo Santo in the city of Genoa. That renowned city of the dead is imposing for its gorgeous display of marble tombs and carved statues, and also for the great number of those reminders of human mortality. Such is true of the "educational mausoleum" of American Methodism. Beginning with Cokesbury College, moss-grown ruins

mark the sites which tell the story of the educational daring and adventure of the church. Probably no state in the Union is without such reminders and some of them have more than a score of those memories. Statisticians and calculating critics may scoff at the economic waste, but after all a residuum remained which set forward that great interest of the church, and the end was achieved through the very failures that were made.

Strange as it may seem, the Methodists made almost no use of printed publicity for nearly half a century. They had in the example of Mr. Wesley an eloquent plea for the recognition of its value, but they contented themselves with personal and direct appeals. They doubtless felt that such a method was best suited to the conditions in the great American wilderness. Robert Williams, who sought to introduce printing at the beginning of the Methodist movement in America, was suppressed. John Dickins, justly entitled to be considered the father of the Methodist press, gave ten years of toil to the enterprise; but the poverty of the publishing business is shown by the list of publications offered at the book room in Philadelphia in 1813. According to Crowther's *Portraiture of Methodism*, the entire list comprised twenty-four items, only three of which were American productions. They were: *Life of Benjamin Abbott*; *Life of William Watters*; and *A Scriptural Catechism*. Dickins began the publication of the *American Arminian Magazine* in 1789, but found it necessary to discontinue it at the end of two years. In 1797 he began, by order of the General Conference, the publication of the *Methodist Magazine*, and it was discontinued at the end of 1798 because of the death of Dickins. The General Conference of 1812 instructed the Book Agents to resume publication of the *Methodist Magazine*, not later



than January 1813; and the next General Conference repeated the command; but the publication was not resumed until 1818. The four volumes published by John Dickins are valuable sources of Methodist history; and the score of years during which the church was without a medium of publicity are years in which there is a dearth of information regarding Methodist progress.

The Methodists never came to a full appreciation of the press until the church was beset with problems and torn with controversies. The struggle over administrative and social issues, which were sharply debated in the early part of the nineteenth century, brought thinking Methodists to the consciousness of the need of means for a wider appeal, if the position of the church were to be maintained. Minorities, finding their liberty of discussion restricted, turned to the press for disseminating their theories and beliefs; and majority factions were driven to the use of the same medium for counteracting agitation against the church. We have noticed already the rise of the *Methodist Repository* and its successor, *Mutual Rights*, organs of the "Reformers." In 1829 *The Itinerant* was issued in Baltimore with Melville Cox as editor, and its mission was to defend the church against the agitations of the Reformers. The paper was maintained for about ten years and was discontinued. The first great Methodist paper to be established was *Zion's Herald*. The first issue appeared January 9, 1823, and it was published in Boston until September 5, 1828, when it was purchased by the Book Concern and consolidated with the *Christian Advocate*, to which the name *Zion's Herald* was added. In 1833 twenty laymen, organized as the Boston Wesleyan Association, effected an arrangement by which the publication in Boston was resumed and under the original name. The paper has been issued by that organization ever since; its files are complete; and it is today, as it



has been through the years, a worthy representative of the Methodist Church and a staunch defender of righteousness.

*The Wesleyan Journal*, projected by Stephen Olin, appeared in Charleston, South Carolina, October 1, 1825. It was the second Methodist paper established in the United States. Owing to the illness of Dr. Olin, William Capers became the first editor. On March 17, 1827, it was merged with the *Christian Advocate* in New York, and its name was perpetuated in the title of that Journal until 1866. The parent member of the group of Christian Advocates sent forth its initial number from New York, on September 9, 1826. In addition to the mergers already noted, it absorbed the *Holston Conference Messenger* in 1827; *The Religious Messenger*, Philadelphia, and *The Augusta Kentucky Herald* in 1828; and in later years, *The Methodist*, *The Northern Christian Advocate*, *The Methodist Times*, *The Washington Christian Advocate*, and *The Pittsburg Christian Advocate*. At least three separate and complete files of the *Christian Advocate* are in existence. *The Western Christian Advocate* was established in 1834, and the *Christian Apologist*, German, in 1839, both domiciled in Cincinnati. In 1832 the *Christian Sentinel* was established in Richmond, Virginia, and in 1836 it was changed to *The Richmond Christian Advocate*, a paper authorized by the General Conference of that year. Under that name it has been published ever since; it is the oldest paper in the Southern Church; but its files unfortunately are not complete. In 1834 *The Western Methodist* was established in Nashville, in 1836 the name was changed to *The Southwestern Christian Advocate*, in 1846 to *The Nashville Christian Advocate*, in 1851 to *The Louisville and Nashville Christian Advocate*, and in 1858 to the *Christian Advocate*. This is the General Organ of the Southern Church. In 1836

a Christian Advocate was established in Charleston, South Carolina, by action of the General Conference. On January 23, 1836, *The Mississippi Christian Herald*, edited by John Newland Maffitt, was launched at Natchez. It was published under the patronage of the Mississippi Conference, but after about two years it was discontinued.

Numerous other periodicals were established but most of them disappeared. These are the more important ones and they show the impulse in response to which the Methodist press was developed. It came into being during the period of the greatest controversies through which the church has passed; and no agency which Methodism has employed has been more useful and potent in the establishment and defence of its aims and ideals, than has the system of publications thus developed. The importance of the Methodist press has varied somewhat with the issues before the church, but it has always been a creditable representative of the ecclesiastical and Christian ideals of the Methodist people.

## CHAPTER VII

### SLAVERY

THE discussion of slavery, as a factor in Methodist history, has been deferred to this point in order that the facts might be presented consecutively; and for the no less valid reason that at this period the subject reached the peak of its tragic importance in the progress of the Church. No question which has agitated the minds of the American people is more difficult of treatment, or has exercised a more far-reaching influence upon our social and religious progress. Its political, economic, social and religious bearings make it one of the most complicated of our public affairs. The disruption of the Church and the tragedy of civil strife in which the controversy ended so warped the judgment of all sides as to make almost impossible a judicious approach to the question. At the South, anti-slavery agitations were a kind of sheet lightning in which objects of attack were located and haled to judgment, whether righteously or not. On the other side, the war enhanced the virtue and the ecclesiastical fortune of those who were able to lay large claim to credit for a victorious cause. On both sides, there was probably an overvaluation of all these facts. Slavery was a major factor in the War Between the States; but, as an issue in the Church, it is separate and distinct from the war.

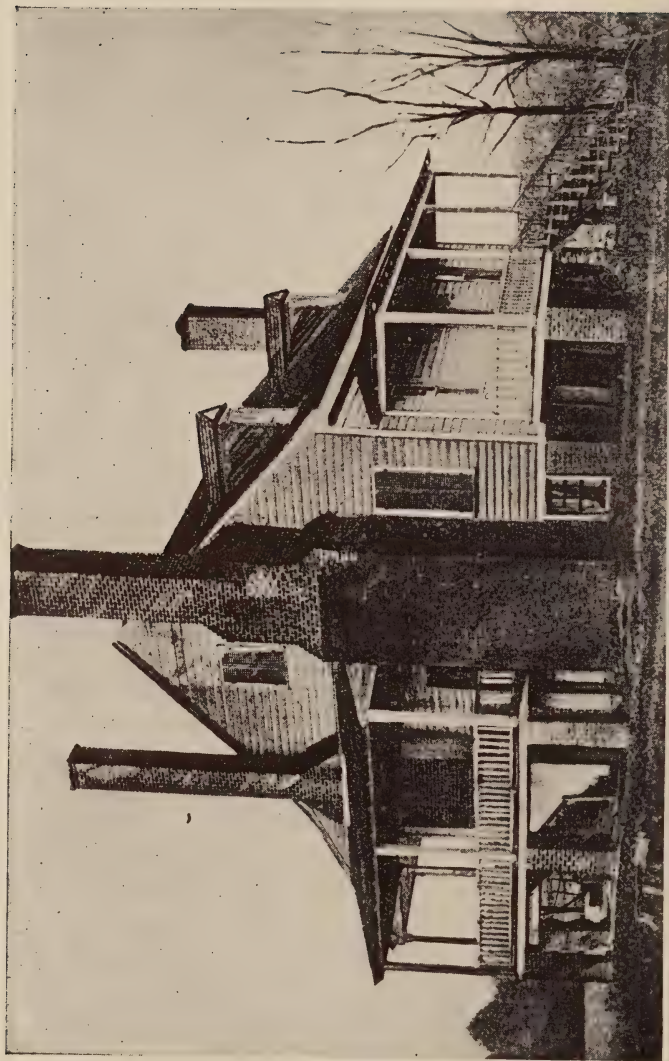
The time has come, we think, when slavery may be studied with courageous frankness and when all the facts should be brought into the light. When that shall be done all parties and all factions will have enough of

which to be ashamed and none will have just reason for pride and boasting. Negro slavery was an institution for which no section can claim for its connection with it a counsel of perfection. It was a part of that mysterious social development of the human race handed down from the remotest civilizations; a thing tolerated and practiced by all religions; and a part of the economic and social policy of all governments. Its presence in America, therefore, was an inheritance from civilizations beyond the seas. Bancroft, the historian, says that it was not limited to the exploitation of the Negro race; but that Scots taken on the field of Dunbar and Royalists captured at the battle of Worcester were sold into servitude. He says, too, that the reason for New York not being a slave state, like Carolina, was due to climate and not to the superior humanity of its founders.

Lecky describes the emancipation of the slaves of the West Indies as one of the "perfectly virtuous acts recorded in the history of nations." Those great words sound well enough so long as one does not know that back of that "perfectly virtuous" moment lies a long era of sordid political iniquity which robs the act of its moral grandeur. At the time of the adoption of the Federal Constitution, slavery was an important factor in shaping political thought and action. By the very terms of the Constitution it was made a buffer between contending interests and factions; and when representation in Congress was based upon a "Federal population" computing three-fifths of the slaves, the Negro was doomed to be the victim in our national struggles and a pawn in our political bargaining. In the Convention which framed the Constitution, Colonel Mason, of Virginia, referred to the slave trade as an "infernal traffic originated in the avarice of British merchants." He said also that the British government







GREEN HILL HOUSE

In this house near Louisburg, North Carolina, the first Conference of American Methodism was held, April 20, 1785.

constantly checked the attempts of Virginia to put a stop to it. A compromise was effected by which slave importation was continued for twenty years after the adoption of the Constitution.<sup>1</sup> That compromise multiplied the difficulties of emancipation a thousand fold, and it is an example of bargaining in social interests and relations which will probably never be wholly eliminated from our political life..

From the beginning, many people in all sections of the country were sincerely opposed to slavery. But the economic importance of the institution in the South gave that section a vital and a peculiar interest in its continuance, and its position was fortified by Constitutional guarantees which it felt must be maintained inviolate. As a consequence, there was developed a vigorous and an unequivocal literature in defence of the economic, social and moral legitimacy of slavery. After a time, the position of the North came to be the opposite of that held in the South, as were its laws and literature; but the history of New England shipping reveals a direct responsibility for slavery, rooted in exactly the same motive as that which promoted it in the South—the profit motive. And there is no more defence for the connection of American shipping with the African coast than there is for the literature and the slave-block of the South.

The race prejudice so often charged to the South is a fact which one may confess with all frankness; for it is by no means an exclusive trait or fault of that section. It is the manifestation of a feeling which all sections share and which no statute can remove. Mr. Lincoln is quoted as saying, in the debate with Mr. Douglass in 1858, that there were physical differences between the two races which would forever forbid them living together on terms of political and social

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Political History of Slavery*, George, pp. 10ff. (See also E Elliot's *Debates*, pp. 456-460).

equality. He also advocated the colonization of the Negroes outside the United States; and in his message to Congress in December, 1862, he recommended the colonization of free Negroes in South America.<sup>2</sup> It is clear that Mr. Lincoln sensed an attitude which was not wholly provincial, and that he recognized it as a serious problem. The Constitution, under which the State of Oregon was admitted, forbade slavery; but it provided that: "No free Negro or mulatto not residing in this state at the adoption of this Constitution, shall come, reside or be within this State or hold any real estate or make any contract or maintain any suit therein; and the legislative assembly shall provide penal laws for the removal by public officers of all such free Negroes and mulattoes and for their effectual exclusion from the State."<sup>3</sup> Some years ago the author heard a distinguished speaker from the North say to an assembly of Negroes: "Your people have pushed over into our Northern cities by hundreds and by thousands and we know you; I am frank to say to you that the Southern people are a great deal more fond of you than we are." This was no bald word of discouragement; for it was balanced immediately by the statement that it was a day of opportunity as great as the difficulty. But one does not have to be told that the form in which the words were cast indicates a racial attitude, North and South, which constitutes one of the real problems of American social and political life. The Japanese trouble which occurred in California a few years ago is a case in point; and the incident which occurred more recently in Detroit over the entertainment of a student group including Negroes as well as whites, is another of many that might be cited.

The point in all this is that the responsibility for

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 51, 70.

<sup>3</sup> *Congressional Globe*, 1st Session 35th Congress, p. 1964.



slavery and for racial antipathies is not a crime which rests upon any particular section of the country, nor does it apply to a single race. The South utilized slavery as an agricultural asset; and, through the slave trade, the North turned the needs of the South into a commercial resource, and we share together the feeling and the attitude of "Nordic superiority." The slavery legislation of the different sections of the country might be contrasted at length, but we are not interested so much with statutes as with attitudes and with the general position on the issue itself.

The full significance of the slavery compromises which were written into the Constitution did not begin to appear until the first session of the eighth Congress, when a large majority of the representatives from New England vigorously opposed the appropriation for carrying out the plighted faith of the Government in the purchase of the Territory of Louisiana. The chief contention was that it was slave territory and its formation into states would disturb the equalities of the political partnership of states established by the terms of the Constitution.<sup>4</sup> There were always, and in all sections, some who addressed themselves to the moral aspects of the issue; but, to the minds of the vast majority, the issues involved were political and economic rather than social or moral. In 1811 this tension was developed again in the debate over the admission of Louisiana into the sisterhood of states. Josiah Quincy of Massachusetts argued that the influence of slave votes upon the political power of the eastern portion of the country, and the anticipated transmission of power to the west were subjects of great jealousy to some of the best patriots in the Northern and Eastern states at the time of the adoption of the Constitution, and these patriots, if they had foreseen that the pop-

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<sup>4</sup> *Annals*, 1st Session, 8th Congress, p. 461.

ulation beyond the Mississippi was to be brought into Congress, to frame our laws, control our rights, and decide our destiny, would not for one moment have listened to it. He then said that they knew that when the weight of particular sections of a confederacy were greatly unequal the resulting power would be abused; and that it was not in the nature of man to exercise it with moderation.<sup>5</sup> It was *political power* of which they were *jealous*, and not the moral aspects of slavery. They neither feared the extension of slavery, nor the moral consequences of it; but they feared the *abuse of power* by the major fraction of the confederation.

The debates of the Convention which framed the Constitution show that there was no manifest conviction as to the crime of slavery. Pinckney of South Carolina said, "If slavery be wrong, it is justified by the example of all the world," and that may be taken as typical of Southern political opinion on the subject. Sherman of Connecticut expressed the opinion that the public good did not require the right to import slaves to be taken from the states, and that it should be left alone. Ellsworth of the same state said, "Let every State import what it pleases." King of Massachusetts said that the subject should be considered in a political light only, while Gorham, his associate, declared that the Eastern States had no motive to union but a commercial one.<sup>6</sup> The subject was widely discussed, but the general attitude of the Convention might be well and adequately summed up by the French phrase "*laissez faire*."

Finally, in 1820 when the Missouri controversy was at the height of public interest, citizens of Newport, Rhode Island, in a petition against the admission of Missouri, said: "Slavery, as it now exists in the United

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 3rd Session, 11th Congress, pp. 524ff. (Quoted in *Political History of Slavery*, George, pp. 19, 20).

<sup>6</sup> *Political History of Slavery*, George, pp. 9-14

States, in the opinion of your memorialists, can never be made a matter of reproach to the existing government or present generation. It was an evil introduced into the colonies by the parent State, and acquiesced in to a great degree by the colonies themselves, in an age when the traffic in slaves was pursued by all nations without suspicion of its enormity.

"The Northern colonies participated in it equally with the Southern, and the navigation of the New England ports, and particularly of this town, was employed continually on the African coast, in the transportation of slaves to the different American markets, and by means of American capital. There can be no reproach, therefore, cast upon our Southern brethren for the introduction of this evil, which, as your memorialists conceive, will not equally attach to ourselves and to the English nation. We were all equally disposed to embark in the traffic, and to avail ourselves of its proceeds, and the guilt, if any there be, must be shared in an equal degree by the parties concerned."<sup>7</sup> With these unequivocal words, we leave any further consideration of the political aspects of slavery to the interest and imagination of the reader.

It must not be assumed that the interest in slavery either originated in or was confined to political circles. It had an echo in every council of the people, and particularly those of the Christian Church. From the time that the Wesleyan societies were established on the Atlantic seaboard, to the final destruction of the institution in the bloody struggle of the sixties, it was an issue in every Conference of the Methodists. It was an ancient institution, with unqualified sanctions in the history and practice of all civilized nations, and any movement against it was a pioneer enterprise. There were philanthropic leaders, like Wesley and Wil-

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<sup>7</sup> *Annals*, 1st Session, 16th Congress, Vol. II., pp. 2452-3.



berforce in England, who resisted the slave trade with all the earnestness of their being. The Quakers in America stoutly opposed it; Coke and Asbury and the leaders of the Methodist Church raised their voices against the sin and practice of slavery; more than once the Colony of Virginia sought to suppress it; and all the way from New England to Georgia, there were strong opponents of the institution.

The record of Mr. Wesley on the slave trade is a credit both to himself and to the age in which he lived. In 1763 he referred to it as "that execrable sum of all villainies;" and it is a singular fact that the last letter he wrote dealt with slavery, with a particular mention of American slavery. Just six days before his death, he wrote William Wilberforce:

"London, February 24, 1791.

"My Dear Sir:—Unless the Divine power has raised you up to be as an Athanasius, *contra mundum*, I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise, in opposing that execrable villainy, which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils; but, *if God be for you, who can be against you?* Are all of them together stronger than God? *O! be not weary in well doing!* Go on in the name of God, and in the power of his might, till even American slavery, the vilest that ever saw the sun, shall vanish away before it.

"Reading this morning a tract, wrote by a poor African, I am particularly struck by that circumstance—that a man who has a black skin, being wronged or outraged by a white man, can have no redress; it being a *law*, in our colonies, that the oath of a black, against a white, goes for nothing. What villainy is this!

"That he who guided you, from your youth up, may



continue to strengthen you in this and all things, is the prayer of, dear Sir,

“Your affectionate servant,

“JOHN WESLEY.”<sup>8</sup>

The anti-slavery agitation of Mr. Wesley antedated by fifteen years that of William Wilberforce, and by sixty years the abolition of the slave trade in the dominions of Great Britain; and his opinions and feelings on that subject were reflected by Dr. Coke, Francis Asbury and the American Methodists. Unfortunately the position of George Whitefield, the most popular and influential American preacher of his day, was opposed to that of Mr. Wesley. Under date of March 22, 1751, he wrote Mr. Wesley a letter in which he entered into a scriptural and economic defence of the institution.<sup>9</sup> He told him that he had no hand in bringing slaves to Georgia; but the facts are that in 1740 he recommended an “allowance of Negroes” for promoting the interests of the colony; and he proposed to send Seward, his traveling companion, to England to petition the trustees of the corporation to admit slavery. By his will, he bequeathed fifty slaves to the Countess of Huntingdon, and her letters after Whitefield’s death often refer to the value and sale of those slaves.<sup>10</sup>

Rev. Devereaux Jarratt of Virginia, whom the Methodists regarded as the most religious and the most brotherly of all the Anglican clergy in America, had an acrimonious encounter with Dr. Coke on the subject of the minute on slavery, which the Christmas Conference had adopted. He did not deny his ownership of slaves; but he denied being a friend to slavery, and he said that he did not think that a “disputable matter” should be made a “term of communion,” as was the effect of the minute under discussion.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Life and Times of John Wesley*, Tyerman, Vol. III., pp. 650, 651.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 132.

<sup>10</sup> *History of Methodism*, Stevens, Vol. II., pp. 69, 70.

<sup>11</sup> See *Centennial History of Methodism*, Atkinson, p. 354 and citations.

The purchase of Peter Williams, the slave sexton of John Street Church, New York, was another example of the general acceptance of slavery. The records of that historic church show that he was purchased from a Mr. Aymar, a tobacconist, on June 10, 1783; Peter Williams returned the entire amount to the church, completing the payment on November 4, 1785; but he remained a slave for eleven years after all the purchase money had been returned to the church.<sup>12</sup> It is not known why this was so, but it is probable that he was finally emancipated, either in obedience to the Disciplinary regulation of the Church, or on account of legal enactments by the State of New York. In the South, such records could be duplicated many times over, and many able men devoted their talents to sweeping moral and social defences of the institution. These incidents are not introduced for the sake of the grim comfort of involving others, but to show the wide-spread acceptance of Negro slavery. It was an evil which held in its toils, for one reason or another, ministers and religious leaders as well as the rank and file of the church; and that fact made organized opposition to the institution, by the church, extremely difficult.

Despite the practice of slavery in the church and among church people, there was, from the beginning of the Methodist movement in America, a growing resistance to it. This resistance found expression in all the literature of Methodism. Asbury opposed and resented it, and when his efforts for emancipation failed he expressed the feeling that an effort at amelioration might have been of more practical good to the "poor Africans." Coke vehemently denounced the institution; he sought in every manner possible to stamp it out; and more than once he was threatened with personal violence on account of his opposition to it. There

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<sup>12</sup> *Lost Chapters of Methodism*, Wakeley, pp. 460-471.

were many who shared the views and the feelings of the two great leaders under whom the Methodist Church developed. Even before an organization was effected, the Conferences were grappling with slavery. In 1780, action was taken to the effect that traveling preachers who held slaves must promise to set them free; that slavery was contrary to the law of God, man and nature, hurtful to society and contrary to the dictates of conscience and pure religion; and disapproval of slavery was expressed along with a recommendation for the liberation of slaves. In 1783 local preachers who owned slaves were given a year in which to free themselves of the connection, on pain of being suspended for failure to do so. At the session of the Conference immediately preceding the organization of the church, it was resolved that members who owned slaves and who had been previously warned were to be expelled, local preachers in Virginia were to be tried another year, others were to be suspended at once; and the traveling preacher who was a slave owner faced the blunt edict, "Employ them no more."<sup>13</sup>

At the Christmas Conference, the first book of Discipline was adopted; and the preamble of the legislation on the subject of slavery is apostolic in tone and is worthy of an honored place in the noblest literature of the Christian Church. It says: "We are deeply conscious of the impropriety of making terms of communion for a religious society already established, excepting on the most pressing occasion; and such we esteem the practice of holding our fellow-creatures in slavery. We view it as contrary to the golden law of God on which hang all the law and the prophets, and the unalienable rights of mankind, as well as every principle of the revolution, to hold in the deepest debasement, in more abject slavery than is to be found

<sup>13</sup> *Minutes of the Conferences, 1773 to 1813*, pp. 25, 26, 41, 47, 48.



in any other part of the world except America, so many souls that are capable of the image of God.

"We therefore think it our most bounden duty to take immediately some effectual method to extirpate this abomination from among us: and for that purpose we add the following to the rules of our society, viz." Then follows an elaborate and detailed plan for the gradual emancipation of the slaves of the Methodist people; and the preachers were required to keep a journal containing the names and ages of all slaves, the dates of documents of emancipation, with the book and page of the court record; and these records were to be transmitted to succeeding pastors of the circuit. In paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 this legislation is declared to be "a new term of communion" and a new condition of being admitted "to the Lord's supper." But to these drastic regulations, two fateful exceptions were noted: "N. B. These rules are to affect the members of our society no farther than they are consistent with the laws of the states in which they reside.

"And respecting our brethren in Virginia that are concerned, and after due consideration of their peculiar circumstances, we allow them two years from the notice given, to consider the expedience of compliance or non-compliance with these rules."<sup>14</sup>

Notwithstanding the exceptions which a sense of justice imposed upon those pioneer legislators of Methodism, the utterances of the first Discipline show a bold and courageous stand which should challenge the admiration of the world. Alas, that the church was so soon forced from the high ground it had taken! In the Minutes of 1785, there is this record:

"It is recommended to all our brethren to suspend the execution of the minute on slavery till the deliberations of a future conference; and that an equal space

<sup>14</sup> *Book of Discipline*, 1784, pp. 16, 17.



of time be allowed all our members for consideration, when the minute shall be put in force." The pathos of that note of retreat is deepened by what sounds like a plea for the soul of the church: "N.B. We do hold in the deepest abhorrence the practice of slavery; and shall not cease to seek its destruction by all wise and prudent means."<sup>15</sup> A more eloquent commentary upon the state of the church could not be found than is contained in these melancholy words. For the next eleven years, the subject of slavery found little place in the legislation of the Methodists: a direct fulfillment of that discriminating observation of the old prophet, "like people, like priest."

At the second General Conference, held in 1796, the subject was approached again, but with manifest timidity and caution. The Conference registered its deepening conviction on the subject of the evils of slavery; exhorted the preachers to be cautious in admitting slaveholders to official station in the church; and admonished them to counsel members to be admitted freely and faithfully on the subject of slavery. Then follows some directions concerning the emancipation of slaves which are purchased, after a time of service to be determined by the quarterly meeting; and the entire subject of Negro slavery was committed to the membership of the church as a topic for deep personal deliberation, until the next General Conference. In 1800 action was taken to the effect that a traveling preacher who becomes the owner of a slave, by any means, "shall forfeit his ministerial character in our church, unless he execute, if practicable, a legal emancipation of such slaves, conformably to the laws of the state in which he lives." The Annual Conferences were directed to draw up addresses on the gradual emancipation of slaves, which were to be presented to the legislatures

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<sup>15</sup> *Minutes of the Conferences, 1773 to 1813*, p. 55.

of states having no general laws on that subject; and it was resolved that through committees and petitions the matter be pressed from year to year until the desired end should be accomplished.<sup>16</sup> Bishop Asbury said of this action, "Nothing could so effectually alarm and arm the citizens of South Carolina against the Methodists as the *Address of the General Conference*."<sup>17</sup> On account of that address, John Harper and George Dougherty, in charge of Cumberland circuit in Charleston, were attacked by a mob. Harper escaped without injury; but Dougherty, who was feeble in health, was thrust under a pump and was almost drowned before he was rescued; and some years after, he died of a pulmonary trouble which was said to have dated from that night and experience of abuse.<sup>18</sup>

The next General Conference, 1804, showed signs of a general retreat on the slavery question. The declaration of conviction as to its sinfulness was softened, and the paragraph regarding the emancipation of slaves under the direction of the quarterly meeting had this notable amendment: "Except at the request of the slave, in case of mercy and humanity, agreeable to the judgment of a committee of the male members of the society, appointed by the preacher who has the charge of the circuit." The paragraph advising the sending of addresses to state legislatures on the subject of emancipation was stricken out; and the preachers were charged to admonish the slaves, as they might have opportunity, on the subject of obedience to their masters.<sup>19</sup> This action reveals a tenseness of feeling on the subject which it was not necessary to state, and this new position was certainly a far cry from the bold stand of 1784. What this Conference lacked of a full surrender was completed four years later, when the reaction

<sup>16</sup> *Journals of the General Conference*, 1796, pp. 22, 23; 1800, p. 41.

<sup>17</sup> *Asbury's Journal*, Vol. III., p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> *Methodism in Charleston*, Mood, pp. 87-91.

<sup>19</sup> *Journal of the General Conference*, 1804, pp. 60ff.

reached a stage which resulted in the offering of a motion to strike from the Discipline everything on the subject of slavery. The motion was not adopted; but all that related to slaveholding by private members was stricken out; and the General Conference abdicated to local constituencies in the following words: "The General Conference authorizes each annual conference to form their own regulations relative to buying and selling slaves." And to complete this reactionary chapter of Methodist legislation, Bishop Asbury made the motion which was carried, "That there be one thousand Forms of Discipline prepared for the use of the South Carolina Conference, in which the section and rule on slavery be left out."<sup>20</sup>

After 1808 the General Conference seems to have been disposed to abandon the effort as futile and hopeless. Indeed, a committee of nine of that Conference was appointed to consider a memorial from Staunton, Virginia; and it reported that slavery was an evil "past remedy," due to civil authorities and to a membership "contented with laws so unfriendly to freedom." It was moved to strike out certain portions of the paragraph so that the law might read: "Therefore no slaveholder shall be eligible to any official station in our church hereafter where the laws of the state in which he lives will admit of emancipation, and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom." This committee, having only three distinctly Southern men on it, stated frankly the reasons for the helplessness of the church, and at the same time it gave a true explanation of what had been the course of Methodist action on this subject.<sup>21</sup> Although practically nothing new was written into the Discipline for the next twenty years, there was not an hour when slavery was not one of the living issues of the church. It was during this time that

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 1808, p. 93.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 1816, pp. 139, 141, 170.



there occurred the contest over the election of a delegate to the British Conference, which resulted in the election of William Capers, a slaveholder, over Wilbur Fisk, a non-slaveholder, by a vote of 82 to 72.<sup>22</sup>

In 1836 the Committee on Slavery, through John Davis, the chairman, reported: "Resolved, etc., That it is inexpedient to make any change in our book of Discipline respecting slavery, and that we deem it improper further to agitate the subject in the General Conference at present." This same Conference then took a vigorous and almost a unanimous position against the aggressions of the abolitionists. William Lord, delegate from the Wesleyan connection in England, and William Case, delegate from the Wesleyan Church in Upper Canada, gave great offence by their strong anti-slavery sentiments; and Nathan Bangs, William Capers and Thomas A. Morris were appointed to reply on behalf of the Conference. George Storrs and Samuel Norris, delegates to the Conference from New Hampshire and Maine respectively, addressed an abolition meeting in Cincinnati during the sitting of the body. Stephen G. Roszell offered a paper, the preamble of which was a strong indictment of the abolitionists, followed by two resolutions: "1. That they disapprove in most unqualified sense the conduct of two members of the General Conference, who are reported to have lectured in this city recently upon and in favor of modern abolitionism. 2. That they are decidedly opposed to modern abolitionism, and wholly disclaim any right, wish or intention to interfere in the civil and political relation between master and slave as it exists in the slave-holding states of this Union." It is true that the author of the paper was from one of the conservative Conferences, but the paper was adopted by a vote of 122 to 11. Another incident of the Con-

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 1828, p. 339.



ference was the result of the circulation of what purported to be an Address to the General Conference, by Orange Scott. William Winans and J. Stamper brought it to the floor by the introduction of the following: "On motion, resolved that a pamphlet circulated among the members of this General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, by a member of that body, containing reports of the discussion on modern abolitionism, palpably false, and calculated to make an impression to the injury of the character of some of the members engaged in the aforesaid discussion, is an outrage on the dignity of this body, and merited unqualified reprehension." The attitude of the Conference is shown again in the fact that these severe strictures were adopted by a vote of 97 to 19.<sup>23</sup>

At the Conference of 1840, the Westmoreland circuit of Virginia, then a part of the Baltimore Conference, made complaint for a second time against the action of the Baltimore Conference in taking away its privileges under the law of the church. A special committee of nine was appointed to consider the case. The report said: "Resolved, by the delegates of the several Annual Conferences, in General Conference assembled, That, under the provisional exceptions of the general rule of the church on slavery, the simple holding of slaves, or mere ownership of slave property, in states or territories where the laws do not admit the emancipation, and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom, constitutes no legal barrier to the election or ordination of ministers to the various grades of office known in the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church and cannot, therefore, be considered as operating any forfeiture of right in view of said election and ordination."

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 1836, pp. 446, 447, 475, 479, 486.

And this interpretation received the approval of the Conference.<sup>24</sup> Such is the history of slavery in the legislation of the undivided church.

From the very beginning of its history, American Methodism faced an impossible situation. For its anti-slavery action, it was never able to enlist the sympathy and support of the great majority of the Methodists; and its efforts were negatived by a civil administration entirely beyond its control. There was an ominous meaning in the medley of action and inaction, of advance and retreat, which any student will appreciate. The church was controlled by good men, but they were wrestling with a problem which consistently defied every solution ever proposed. Church and state alike were rushing helplessly toward the abyss of civil strife. The Conference was trembling upon the brink of a disaster which it sought to avoid. The more the South insisted upon the recognition of its political rights, the more apologetic must be its defence of the practice and perpetuation of slavery. The more the North insisted upon the enormity of the crime of the institution, the more it must realize its part and responsibility for its existence. There was no desire to wreck the social fabric of the South, nor to paralyze Southern industry. All these facts gave pause to right thinking and right feeling men on both sides as the tide of events swept on. No side gained a complete victory and all sides lost. In the records of the church we find but few instances of discipline or expulsion under the rule prohibiting slavery. A man named Tomkins, who lived in North Carolina, was expelled for selling a slave, and Bishop Asbury refused ordination to Philip W. Taylor of Kentucky because he owned slaves. There were other cases, of course, but they were so few as to cre-

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24 *Ibid.*, 1840, pp. 34-36, 171.

ate no serious agitation among those who were opposed to the rule.

The superficial student of these apparently dilatory and chaotic proceedings is apt to feel that in the end there was an abject surrender to a spirit of defeatism in the church. Such, however, was by no means the net result of the long and desperate struggle within the ranks of Methodism. The Methodist Church probably furnished the widest and the most effective forum in America for the development of anti-slavery sentiment. Had it not been for the ferment of opposition which it propagated, emancipation might have been delayed for a generation. It is true that the action regarding slavery was intermittent and progress was not consistent, but the church did not fail. There was no greater factor in the movement against slavery than the Methodist Church; and, despite all opposition, the South had a share in bringing about the emancipation of the slaves. Its overwhelming economic interest in the institution determined the attitude of the section as a whole, and there could be no organized opposition to slavery except at the peril of those who dared to undertake it. But there were thousands of people in the South who were as sincerely opposed to slavery as were any in the North. They were simply crushed under an avalanche of opposing sentiment; and in the very nature of the case their virtue has not been enhanced by a share of credit for a popular and victorious cause.

It was inevitable that militant opposition to slavery would focus in the North, where there was a friendlier and more detached feeling. Memorials signed by five hundred preachers and ten thousand members were sent to the General Conference of 1840. These petitions were largely from non-slaveholding sections of the church. The North was practically free from slaveholding, but it was not a unit against the institution.



There were many instances of unfair and unjust treatment, even persecution. Bishop Hedding was attacked by the abolitionists; Orange Scott and LeRoy Sunderland were charged with slander; Charles K. True, James Floy and Paul R. Brown were tried by the New York Conference; and Lucius C. Matlack, an abolitionist, was refused admission into the Philadelphia Conference and, notwithstanding the fact that his gifts, graces and usefulness were unconditionally approved, he was subsequently refused a renewal of his license as local preacher, by the quarterly conference of Union charge in Philadelphia. Even after the separation, dissensions continued in the North until after the war.

The anti-slavery movement constitutes one of the most tangled skeins of American history; and it is vain for any group or organization to claim entire credit for such a nation-wide social reform. It represented a constant growth of sentiment and ideal, with numerous shiftings of its organic center. There were many factors which contributed to the achievement, but no sharply defined point of origin can be traced. Back of all efforts, no matter by what name they are known, was the Christian Church—the motivating and inspiring influence. Without the spiritual dynamic which it furnished, the Negro might be in slavery still.

The collapse of anti-slavery agitation as a legislative proposition, marked the beginning of a program of personal crusading; and the organization of the anti-slavery cause independently of either political or church connections. In 1835 more than a million pieces of literature were distributed and a staff of fourteen lecturers was maintained. In the forefront of this final phase of the abolition movement was Charles G. Finney. He was an evangelist, not an anti-slavery agitator; but his deep religious convictions gave him interest in every variety of social problem, or proposal for



the betterment of mankind. Along with his evangelism, he espoused the cause of temperance; he attacked the social vices of great cities; and in like manner the slave became the subject of his militant appeal. He foresaw the danger of the uncontrolled agitator, and he said such would carry the nation "fast into a civil war." He said further: "Unless the public mind can be engrossed with the subject of salvation, . . . the church and the world, ecclesiastical and state leaders, will become embroiled in one common infernal squabble that will roll a wave of blood over the land." In this Finney proved to be a prophet indeed, for the anti-slavery movement lost its missionary motive and culminated in a bitter and bloody sectional war from which we have not even yet recovered.

The militant leader of the anti-slavery crusade, the man who probably deserves to be ranked as the high priest of the cause, was Theodore Dwight Weld, in many respects the greatest of Finney's converts. Although his activity was outlawed at Lane Seminary, he won a hearing for the most unpopular cause ever championed by a social leader. He organized the "Lane Rebels" and with the financial support of the Tappans of New York, and other independent literary and political leaders, he cemented the opposition to slavery and crystallized into action and achievement that which had been wrought out at the forge of the church.

It is generally assumed that the anti-slavery cause was pre-eminently the projection of Northern virtue and philanthropy. It is easy to form such a conclusion, because opposition to slavery would not be tolerated in the South, and because of secession and the war. It is not necessary and it would not be true to deny the great place which the North had in the movement for emancipation; but it should be remembered, also, that there was a large contingent of Southern men and women

enlisted with the crusaders of the thirties. Among them were some of the most effective leaders of the opposition to slavery. Outstanding were Marius Robinson of Tennessee; William T. Allen of Alabama; James Thome and James G. Birney of Kentucky; a Mr. Hedges of Virginia; Huntingdon Lyman of Louisiana; and Sarah and Angelina Grimke of South Carolina. James G. Birney was a slave owner, a lawyer in Kentucky and Alabama and twice nominated for President of the United States by the Liberty Party. He went North for the sake of his convictions on the slavery issue. The Grimke sisters were Episcopalians in South Carolina but when they went North they found hospitality, not in the church of their childhood, but among the Quakers. When it is remembered that enlistment against slavery meant expatriation, it is undoubtedly a great tribute to Southern conviction that so many and such capable men and women joined in the anti-slavery crusade and gave themselves in sacrificial service to the cause of slave-emancipation.

James G. Birney charged that the American churches were the bulwarks of slavery; and to expect that there would not be a clash between its material interests and its soul, must leave out of account the men and women who composed their membership. As we have pointed out, New England shipping was pro-slavery until the right to import slaves expired under the twenty-year Federal limitation. The South had rights and interests in the institution which were fortified by legal sanctions; and the Methodism of the South was pro-slavery because an overwhelming majority of the membership determined its policy. The North was anti-abolitionist because there were influences in that direction which it could not ignore. The North was ultimately captured by abolition; and the South withdrew under what it felt to be an ecclesiastical necessity.

It may be true that on both sides there was too great regard for secondary considerations; but it is much easier to analyze and criticize events than it is to sponsor an opposite course in the face of stern opposition, or even to forecast the effect of a different policy.

In the course of events, the churches were disrupted and a social and sectional chasm was made which has kept people of a common blood, a common heritage and history, and kindred ideals apart to the hurt of the nation and the world. When all the facts shall have been sifted, all charges made and all credits allowed, it is probable that the responsibility for secession and the war will lie at the door of a hesitant national government. Only Congress had sufficient power and authority to deal effectively and justly with the issues of that period; and it temporized when it should have entered the breach and have borne bravely and heroically whatever odium might come as a consequence of meeting courageously the demands of a desperate situation.

After the tragic experiences of a great war, the attendant evils of an era of reconstruction, and a longer and sadder period of criticism and misunderstanding, we begin to appreciate the American heart on both sides of the slavery struggle. In the clear and dispassionate judgment of a period seventy-five years removed from the last smoldering embers of our national catastrophe, we come to know that there was an honesty of heart and purpose in all factions which was little understood in those fateful days of turmoil and strife. On the one side, deep and abiding convictions were sacrificed upon the altar of peace; and on the other, passionate yearnings of the soul were crushed under an avalanche of social and economic circumstance. With this survey of the ebb and flow of senti-

ment and action in church and nation, and of the valiant struggle of Methodism to preserve the integrity of its soul, we turn to the threshold of eighteen forty-four.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### RENT IN TWAIN

THE events of the General Conference of 1844 constitute a logical sequence of the facts and feelings which had been often recorded and ever with a more ominous emphasis—a culmination foreshadowed from the very beginning of the American societies. The first century of Methodist history, as we have seen, began in spiritual dearth, and it ended in ecclesiastical disaster. But the delineation of the events which led up to that catastrophe is not so simple a matter as the mere statement of the case might seem to imply. The events of this period truly form one of the most complicated chapters in the history of Methodism. The task of interpreting the upheaval which was the result of so many contributing causes, ancient and modern, social and economic, political and religious, would be difficult enough at best; and when the maze of fact and of conflicting interests and opinions is complicated by deeds and discussions reflecting the prejudices and passions of the men who were parties to the contest, the undertaking assumes proportions from which the strongest might sincerely wish to turn away. But after all, the worth of history does not lie in the embellishment of uncontested areas of progress; it is revealed through the discovery of evidences of greatness and virtue in the desolated and storm-swept zones found in the march of events.

For contemporary discussions of this entire subject, the student is referred to *The Disruption of*

*the Methodist Episcopal Church*, by Myers; and *History of the Great Secession from the Methodist Episcopal Church*, by Elliott. It should not be overlooked, however, that the literature from which this period must be interpreted was produced under the smarting of wounds which only heaven could heal; and much of it might very well be expunged from human recollection, if such a thing were possible. The oratory had the pitch of anger and excitement, and the reasoning lacked the judicious poise and the balance of judgment which the seriousness of the hour demanded. A flood of sophistry and special pleading did more to inflame than to inform the Methodist public. The documents and volumes, whose yellowed pages embalm the story of that lamentable contest, reveal the desperate earnestness of good men in an effort to resolve difficulties which were too great for the powers of human wisdom and understanding.

The North had come slowly, steadily and, perhaps, with a measure of unwillingness to the necessity of taking an aggressive position against slaveholding, even among those honored with official position in the church. Its attack was greatly embarrassed by political sanctions which, as we have seen, formed an organic feature of national legislation. To this political embarrassment, was added the fact that the Discipline of the church had uniformly excepted the territory in which slavery existed, in conformity to state laws and where emancipation was prohibited, from the operation of the anti-slavery statutes. It was necessary, therefore, for it to justify the action of 1844, by an appeal to ecclesiastical principle which clashed with civil enactments, and to plead "expediency" for a course which could not be justified by the terms of either civil or church law.

The South, from vital economic and social considera-

# THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

The history of the United States is a story of growth and change. It begins with the first people who lived on this land, and continues through the years of exploration, settlement, and the struggle for independence. The story is one of a people who have built a great nation from a small group of pioneers.

The first people who lived on this land were the Indians. They were here long before the first Europeans came.

The first Europeans who came to this land were the Spanish.

The first English who came to this land were the Pilgrims.

The first American who was born here was George Washington.

The first American who was elected President was George Washington.

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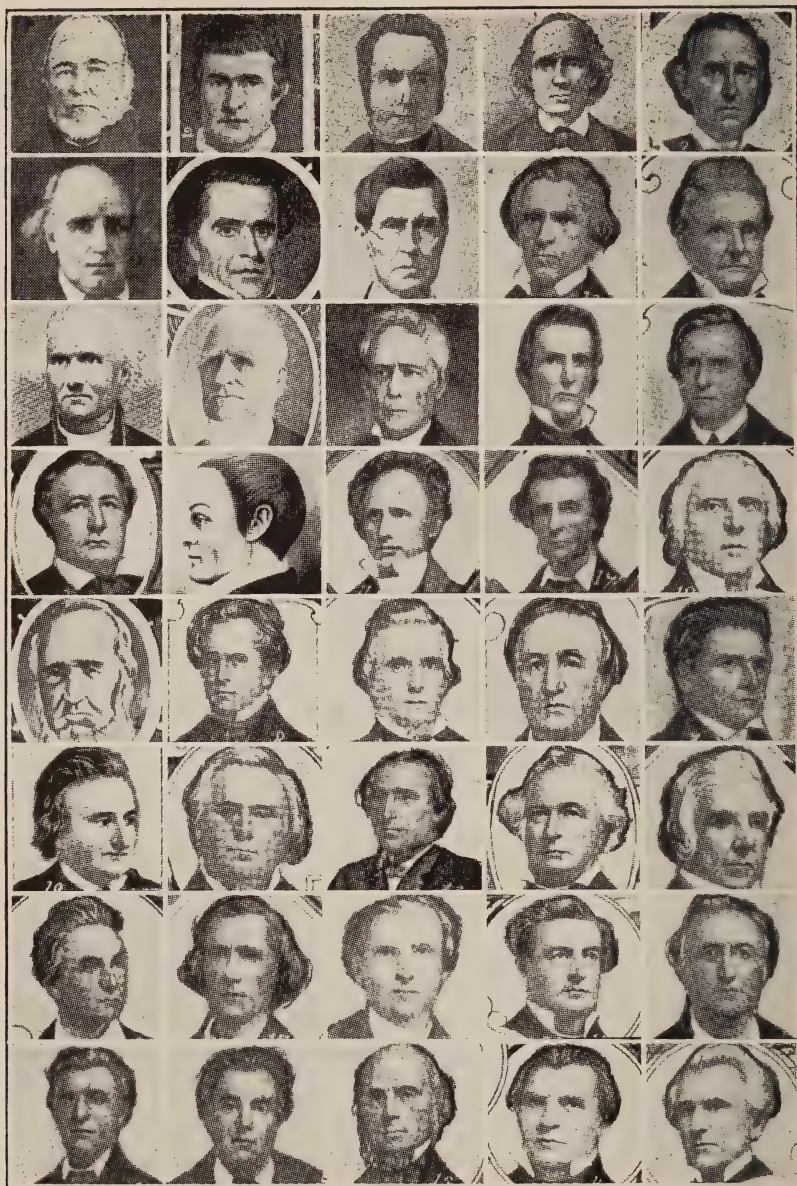
The first American who was elected President was George Washington.

The first American who was elected President was George Washington.

The first American who was elected President was George Washington.

The first American who was elected President was George Washington.

# FORTY OF SIXTY SIGNERS OF THE PROTEST IN 1844.



Row 1—Wm. Murrah, Wm. Winans, H. B. Bascom, T. Stringfield, B. M. Drake.  
 Row 2—J. Lane, W. W. Redman, A. B. Longstreet, E. Stevenson, W. McMahon.  
 Row 3—Wm. Capers, J. C. Berryman, J. Stamper, W. P. Ratcliffe, R. Paine.  
 Row 4—A. L. P. Green, L. Fowler, J. Hamilton, J. Boring, W. A. Smith.  
 Row 5—J. Jamieson, G. F. Pierce, E. F. Sevier, G. W. D. Harris, H. H. Kavanaugh.  
 Row 6—E. W. Sehon, C. Betts, J. E. Evans, T. Maddin, J. Early.  
 Row 7—G. W. Brush, H. A. C. Walker, W. J. Parks, Wm. Wightman, P. Doub.  
 Row 8—A. Hunter, J. W. Glenn, L. M. Lee, J. B. McFerrin, L. Pierce.



tions, could not do otherwise than resist the attack. It naturally insisted upon the Disciplinary exceptions made in its behalf; and it plead the civil guarantees under which its industrial and social life had been developed. The representatives of the South in the General Conference of 1844, asserted that failure to respect the political and ecclesiastical immunities granted to that section would ultimate in the complete disintegration of the church, and the disruption of society itself. Its religious thinking was so thoroughly intertwined with its economic interests, and the political restraints regarding emancipation were such that, as a whole, it did not share the change in the currents of thought which were slowly bringing the world to feel that human slavery was a practice not consistent with the ideals of religion or the interests of civilization.

The problems of church administration, North and South alike, were directly affected, on the one hand by the slow-changing civil law, and on the other by the increasing sensitiveness of the religious conscience on the subject of slavery. The conflict on either side was less voluntary, no doubt, than one might think. The law being mandatory in its processes, made an extremely difficult situation for those who would invoke or who might desire action in obedience to moral and religious principles with which such law chanced to be in conflict. We must, therefore, approach the delicate questions of this stormy era of Methodist history with these preliminary observations in mind; and we must give due credit on all sides for the tenseness of feeling which had developed, if we are to arrive at just conclusions as to what was done.

The struggle of 1844 and after is only indirectly chargeable to those who were the actors in the conflict. It was simply the time to which every Conference since 1784 had postponed its troubles. The postponement of

trouble is the explanation of much that is implied in the rather cryptic and somewhat evasive records of the early Conferences. The Conference of 1844 is one of the landmarks which we must take into account in the survey of the course and progress of the two great bodies of episcopal Methodism. It was an act of consummate wisdom on the part of those who organized the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, that they took immediate steps to publish a volume containing the official documents and their own interpretation of the literature dealing with that momentous period in the history of the church. No greater tribute could be paid to their historical perspective than is recorded in their own words: "Your committee would further state, that we do not attempt to disguise the fact, that the movements of the Methodist Episcopal Church, both North and South, are at this time characterized by facts and circumstances, which will and must be referred to by generations yet unborn, as an important epoch in our history, and will stand paramount among the records of our beloved Church, until the Trump of God shall awake the dead."<sup>1</sup> Every turn in the ecclesiastical fortune of Methodism since that time has verified the foresight and wisdom of the step taken for the preservation of those invaluable sources of Methodist history. The interpretation of the acts of the General Conference of 1844 and of the subsequent developments are major responsibilities of the historian who would make an adequate portrayal of the story of Methodism.

Outside of merely routine matters, the interest of the last General Conference of the united church revolved around Bishop James O. Andrew of Georgia, whose connection with slavery had suddenly become a source of irritation and the occasion for much agitation at the North. When Bishop Andrew was apprised of the feel-

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Organization of the M. E. Church, South*, p. 197.

ing, his desire was to resign his office in the interest of peace; but his purpose brought forth immediate and vigorous protest from the Southern delegates. They held that such action on his part would amount to a virtual surrender of their cause, and would make an intolerable situation for the church in the South. The Bishop yielded to the wishes and opinions of his brethren and did not resign.<sup>2</sup> In response to the inquiry made through the Committee on Episcopacy, he made a frank statement of all the facts touching his connection with slavery. He first became the owner of a slave girl under the will of a friend in Augusta, Georgia; he afterward inherited a slave boy from the family estate of his first wife; and finally, a short time before the General Conference of 1844 assembled, he became possessed of a number of slaves by his marriage to a woman who had inherited them from the estate of her former husband. To the girl and boy whom he had inherited, Bishop Andrew offered freedom when they were willing to go where it would be possible for them to enjoy it; but they both declined to go, and there was no other way for him to emancipate them except to become a law-breaker himself and, at the same time, to surrender the interests and the freedom of the slaves, since they would be subject to seizure and re-enslavement. The slaves belonging to his second wife, he immediately bound to her, whose they were, by a duly executed legal document. By that instrument he renounced all interest and ownership in them. But that course gave him the appearance of being conscious of the impropriety of his connection with slavery, and it also gave him the appearance of adopting a measure for escaping responsibility for slaveholding.

The records indicate that the course of Bishop Andrew was entirely honorable, both as respects his ob-

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<sup>2</sup> *Life of William Capers*, Wightman, p. 379.



servance of the law and in his treatment of the slaves themselves. It is also to his credit that he never purchased a slave and he never sold one. But, since his ownership of slaves came about after his election to the episcopacy, it is not easy to believe that he was as sensitive to the delicacy of the situation as he should have been, nor as to what his ownership of slaves, however acquired, might involve for the church. He could not have been uninformed as to the increasing opposition to slaveholding upon the part of ministers. He had been a member of three General Conferences preceding his elevation to the episcopacy in 1832, and he knew of the growing disposition to withhold all official recognition from those connected with slavery. At the General Conference immediately preceding his election, the contest over the election of a delegate to the British Conference had been finally settled. In 1826, Bishops McKendree and Soule nominated for that place, William Capers who was a slaveholder; Bishops George and Hedding objected and nominated instead Wilbur Fisk. The result was a tie vote and the settlement of the contest went over to 1827, when Bishop Roberts was present; but he declined to break the tie either way. The decision then went to the General Conference of 1828, when Dr. Capers was elected on the second ballot by the slender margin of ten votes.<sup>3</sup> Bishop Andrew knew also that he had been favored over Dr. Capers for the office of Bishop, because he was *not* a slaveholder, while Dr. Capers did own slaves. On the floor of the General Conference of 1844, he admitted that William Winans had spoken to him on the subject: "He said he could not vote for me, because he believed I was nominated under the impression that I was not a slaveholder. I told him I had not sought the nomination, nor did I desire the office, and that my

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<sup>3</sup> *Journal of the General Conference*, 1828, p. 339.



opinions on the propriety of making non-slaveholding a test of qualification for the office of Bishop, were entirely in unison with his own."<sup>4</sup> Whatever interpretation one may put on these words, they must mean that he had a clear understanding of the possible effect of his becoming a slaveholder, and he should have jealously guarded the peace of the church at that point.

Having spoken frankly concerning Bishop Andrew's acquisition of slaves, it remains now to be said that his course was not without positive legal justification. There was in the pronouncements of the General Conference, a distinct offset, as we have seen, to the view of those opposed to slavery; and the issue was less personal than the contest might lead one to believe. It was, at last, a contest between opposing factions on the subject of slavery; and Bishop Andrew's connection with the institution was the occasion for an eruption of the pent-up feelings of the church on that subject. It is clear that the members of the General Conference of 1844 were not in a frame of mind which would qualify them to sit as a court of equity in the decision of anything relating to slavery. As soon as the sentence against the Rev. Francis A. Harding, appealed from the Baltimore Conference, had been affirmed, the inquiry turned to the case of Bishop Andrew and a resolution was introduced by Mr. A. Griffith of the Baltimore Conference, asking him "to resign his office as one of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church." This resolution was afterwards replaced by the Finley substitute which said: "It is the sense of this General Conference that he desist from the exercise of this office so long as this impediment remains"<sup>5</sup> The substitute was passed after ten days of rancorous and bitter debate.

No matter what our theory of the powers of a General

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1844, p. 71; Debates, p. 148.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

Conference, we do not see how it would be possible to establish the consistency of what the General Conference did in the case of Bishop Andrew. It is true that the ministry always formed a separate class in the anti-slavery legislation of the church, but the restrictions had been less against slave ownership than against the merchandise in slaves, and the territory in which slaveholding was established by civil law had been uniformly excepted from the operation of such statutes. For the charge of an infraction of church law, any minister was entitled to formal and orderly process of trial before a jury of his ecclesiastical peers. Yet Bishop Andrew, without being charged with the violation of any law and without even the form of a trial, was placed in the anomalous position of being a bishop by confession of the General Conference, a bishop in the pay of the church, but a bishop without assignment of episcopal duties—by a resolution requesting him to “desist.” His status under the law regarding slavery was clear. At the General Conference of 1836, the Bishops said: “It cannot be unknown to you, that the question of slavery in these United States, by the constitutional compact which binds us together as a nation, is left to be regulated by the several State legislatures themselves; and thereby it is put beyond the control of the general government, as well as that of the ecclesiastical bodies; it being manifest, that in the slaveholding States themselves the entire responsibility of its existence or non-existence rests with those State legislatures.” In the Resolutions censuring the Abolitionists, is this expression: “Resolved that they (the delegates) . . . wholly disclaim any right, wish, or intention to interfere in the civil and political relation between master and slave as it exists in the slaveholding States of this Union.” Quoting again from the Episcopal Address, “The only safe, Scriptural, and prudent way for us, both as min-

isters and people, to take, is wholly to refrain from this agitating subject."<sup>6</sup> It is true that this is not the language of statutes for the regulation of slavery; but they are resolutions and authoritative utterances which, by every fair implication, committed the General Conference to an attitude respecting the institution which it plainly recognized as being protected by the highest law of the land. It was an *interpretation* of Methodist law which was intended for the restraint of those who were insisting upon a reversal of the policy which the church had consistently maintained toward the section where slavery was a legal fixture. Regardless of the moral and religious questions that were being raised with reference to the institution, the South had a right to expect that there would be no sudden reversal of the policy of granting immunity to those who were bound by civil enactments.

If there remained any lingering doubt in any mind as to what was the attitude of the General Conference on this subject, it must have been removed by the action of 1840. The Westmoreland Circuit of the Baltimore Conference, a circuit located in the State of Virginia, was asking to be excepted from the application of the slavery restrictions of the Conference of which it was a part, and to have its rights recognized under the exception of all slaveholding States. The case related wholly to the ministry and the General Conference said: "While the general rule on the subject of slavery, relating to those States only whose laws admit of emancipation, and permit the liberated slaves to enjoy freedom, *should be firmly and constantly enforced*, the exception to the general rule applying to those States where emancipation, as defined above, is not practicable, should be recognized and protected with equal *firmness and impartiality*." The committee re-

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 1836, pp. 446, 447. (See also *History M. E. Church, Bangs*, Vol. IV., pp. 246, 249, 260).



spectfully suggests to the Conference the propriety of adopting the following resolution:

"Resolved, by the delegates of the annual conferences in General Conference assembled, That, under the provisional exception to the general rule of the Church on the subject of slavery, the simple holding of slaves, or mere ownership of slave property, in States or territories where the laws do not admit of emancipation, and permit the liberated slaves to enjoy freedom, constitutes no legal barrier to the election or ordination of ministers to the various grades of office known in the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and cannot, therefore, be considered as operating any forfeiture in view of such election and ordination."<sup>7</sup> This unequivocal declaration, which was passed, is too definite and sweeping in its terms to be misunderstood. Orange Scott, an outstanding abolitionist who later left the church, said of this action: "The General Conference of 1840 decided that slaveholders had a disciplinary right to the office of bishop."<sup>8</sup> When the pronouncements of the General Conference are placed alongside the circumstances, under which Bishop Andrew came into the possession of slaves, the case is relieved of what might otherwise have been its censurable features. A. L. P. Green, of Tennessee, said that at one time Bishop McKendree had purposed to buy a slave boy for a servant, but he had dissuaded him from doing so, and it was said that "the first Methodist Bishop was for a time a slaveholder without censure, though he became such by purchase;" but Bishop Andrew made no appeal to the precedents or purposes of his predecessors in the episcopal office, and he made no concealments of the facts in his own case. In a dignified and manly way, he said: "I have no confession to make; I intend to make none. I stand upon the broad ground

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 1840, p. 171.

<sup>8</sup> *Grounds of Secession from the M. E. Church*, Scott, p. 177.



of the Discipline, on which I took office; and if I have done wrong, put me out . . ., if I have sinned against the Discipline, I refuse not to die.”<sup>9</sup>

In the course of the discussion on the Conference floor, much was said concerning the unacceptability of a slaveholding bishop in Northern Annual Conferences; and it was alleged that the action against Bishop Andrew was necessary on the grounds of “expediency.” There is no reason to doubt the unacceptability of a slaveholding bishop at the North, but the assertion does not state the whole truth. Bishop Andrew would not have been less acceptable in the North than an abolitionist bishop would have been in the South. It will be recalled that Dr. Coke was threatened with personal violence on account of his emancipation activity in 1785; and the shameful treatment of George Dougharty in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1800, was due to resentment of the anti-slavery agitation of the Methodists. So the doctrine of “expediency” carried to its logical conclusion might have left the church with a rather colorless episcopacy.

As we have observed before, it is wide of the mark to accept Bishop Andrew’s ownership of slaves as the one and only explanation of the upheaval which occurred at the General Conference of 1844. His connection with slavery was the *immediate* occasion for the troubles which arose, but it was only the spark in the Methodist tinderbox which started a conflagration toward which the church had been progressing for more than half a century. On the part of the North, it was the culmination of resistance to the practice of slavery as a political institution to which it had been forced to lend its sanction through provisions excepting slaveholding states from the operation of the rules against slavery. On the side of the South, it was a defensive

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<sup>9</sup> *Journal of the General Conference, 1844, p. 149 (Debates).*

struggle for maintaining rights guaranteed by both civil and church law, and for the preservation of its self-respect and its position as an integral part of the Methodism of America. The delegates from the South knew that the heated and bitter controversy over the case of Bishop Andrew was only the prelude to the real conflict—the struggle for the emancipation of the slaves. What the majority in the General Conference did, as the South felt, in contravention of all Disciplinary regulation, was accepted as an indication of the desperateness of Northern purpose concerning slavery. Let us, then, dissociate the conflict from Bishop Andrew that we may study it as a contest between distinctly marked groups within the church. It was not in any sense a contest to which the contending factions came after a course of calm and placid reasoning on the principles involved. The situation on both sides lent an insistent urge to action; an urge before which the judicious poise of Methodist leadership collapsed; and, in a riot of feeling, the Conference undertook to find solution for a problem which had rocked the craft of Methodism from the hour of its ecclesiastical birth.

Those who promoted and profited by the slave trade in the North were gone, and the fewness of the slaves left in that section made it comparatively easy to accomplish their emancipation. Slavery had come to be to the North largely an academic question, affecting the moral and the civil life of the country and particularly that of the church. Following the General Conference of 1832, the proponents of abolition had become more active, and the repressive measures adopted by the Conference of 1836, made them militant and aggressive. Abolitionist leaders launched a bitter campaign against the Methodists in the non-slaveholding states, the effect of which began to be felt through protests and petitions and in an ever increasing volume

of withdrawals from the membership of the church.

Orange Scott said: "It is not slandering the Church to say that, as a whole, she is *pro-slavery to the core*. There is as much proof that the General Conference (1840) of the M. E. Church is pro-slavery, as there is that the United States Congress is pro-slavery. And those brethren who come out from pro-slavery political parties, in consequence of their corruption, and still remain in a pro-slavery church are grossly inconsistent."<sup>10</sup> Individuals began to withdraw from the church; the secession of a group occurred in Utica, New York; another in Cleveland, Ohio; and in Michigan there was a more extensive secession. In 1843, the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America was set up in a convention held at Utica. The new organization soon numbered in its fold seventeen thousand members, drawn largely from the Methodist Episcopal Church. The North was aroused and inflamed on the subject of abolition; the charge of casuistry was brought against the leadership of the church; and it was declared to be "not only a slaveholding, but a slave-defending church." Nine Annual Conferences and ten thousand members sent petitions against slavery to the General Conference of 1844. The New England anti-slavery convention demanded that the rule against slavery be so altered as to make slaveholding a term of membership, and it threatened that if the Conference did not entirely separate the church from all connection with slavery, it would be no longer a home for anti-slavery Methodists. Such was the situation confronting the North at the roll call in 1844. Plainly the church in that section had come to the place where choice must be made of one side or the other, for conciliation was no longer possible.

The Southern section of the church approached the

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<sup>10</sup> *Grounds of Secession from the M. E. Church*, Scott, pp. 65, 66.

Conference with less of internal agitation and strife, but its problem was the same that it had been from the beginning. Its social and economic life had been constructed around slavery. It had regarded its interests in the institution as being protected by the most sacred civil guarantees; for sixty years the church had made consistent acknowledgment of its rights under those guarantees; and it had recognized the disabilities under which the South labored, concerning any scheme of emancipation. When the General Conference assembled, therefore, the South felt that its rights would not be interfered with, and that they would certainly not be taken away by any sudden reversal of ecclesiastical policy. It is true, also, that the South was not less jealous for the maintenance of its rights in the vast estate, spiritual and otherwise, in the church whose building it had shared. The Methodist Church was as much the idol of Southern hearts and firesides as of those at the North. When the Northern majority held unyieldingly and almost solidly to the resolution to eliminate Bishop Andrew, it meant the sweeping away of the last safeguard, and it meant the reduction of the Southern section of the church to a mere dependence—a position inconsistent with its standing and self-respect. Such was the *impasse* created by the vote on the Finley substitute by which Bishop Andrew was demoted.

At this point in the proceedings, the issue was definitely joined. The leadership of the Southern group realized that it had come to a critical and dangerous stage in the long struggle, and the delegates were much disturbed. But they refused to take counsel of their emotions and every subsequent move was the result of sober thought and was definitely planned with one end in view—to save the South and the Southern Church from being destroyed. Dr. Matthew Simpson, after-



ward Bishop, said: "Doctor Capers was in correspondence with John C. Calhoun and other Southern leaders who were watching this phase of the slavery question and the threatened division of the Union." We have not been able to establish that fact; but, if such were the case, it is likely that these eminent statesmen had little occasion to feel ashamed of the achievements of their ecclesiastical understudies. Dr. Simpson then went on to say: "The delegates of the South in the General Conference were more shrewd and diplomatic than those of the North. The latter felt themselves strong, both in the rightfulness of their cause and the strength of their numbers, and the others knew that they were in the minority, and resorted to the use of tact."<sup>11</sup> He was probably correct in saying that the North felt sure of its greater numerical strength; but the assertion that the South used greater diplomacy, shrewdness and tact is open to question.

James Porter, of New England, a leading member of the Conference of 1844, published an article in the *Methodist Quarterly Review* for April, 1871, in which he made a confession for the New England delegates. He said that the New England Conferences wanted among other things, "That Bishop Andrew should be required to purge himself of slavery or vacate the episcopal office;" and that, in order to avoid prominence "in pushing the measures agreed upon," they put the "laboring oar" into the hands of the conservatives. In the same article, reference is made to the request of Bishop Hedding that no afternoon session be held, in order that the Bishops might consult regarding a compromise. The article states: "The Abolitionists regarded this a most alarming measure. Accordingly the delegates of the New England Conferences were *immediately* called together, and, after due delib-

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<sup>11</sup> *The Life of Bishop Matthew Simpson*, Crooks, p. 240.

eration, *unanimously* signed a paper declaring in substance that it was their solemn conviction that if Bishop Andrew should be left by the General Conference in the exercise of episcopal functions, it would break up most of the New England Conferences; and that the only way to be holden together *would be to secede in a body*, and invite Bishop Hedding to preside over them."<sup>12</sup> Bishop Hedding could not be seen before the Bishops met for consultation, but when the paper which he had signed was presented, he asked that his signature be withdrawn, which was done. This, as will be observed, is the confession of one of the parties to the diplomatic maneuvers of those who were on the other side of the contest.

It does not seem that the Northern delegates comprehended the real seriousness of the situation that had developed, and it is certain that some of them did not accept at their face value the warnings of disruption voiced on the floor of the Conference. Following the adoption of the Finley Resolution, Dr. Lovick Pierce gave notice that a protest would be filed by the Southern delegates. On June 3, Dr. William Capers introduced a series of resolutions which sought to divide the church into two jurisdictional Conferences, one for the free and one for the slaveholding states; but the committee appointed to consider the scheme failed to agree and nothing came of it. On June 5, Judge Longstreet presented a declaration on behalf of the Southern and Southwestern Conferences, which stated that the attitude of the General Conference on slavery and abolition, and the extra-judicial proceedings against Bishop Andrew, "Must produce a state of things in the South which renders a continuance of the jurisdiction of that General Conference inconsistent with the success of the ministry in the slaveholding States." The

12 Quoted in *The Disruption of the M. E. Church*, Myers, pp. 42, 44.

declaration was submitted to a "Committee of Nine"—three from the North, three from the South and three from what were known as the conservative Conferences. Dr. Robert Paine of Tennessee was the chairman. Five of the committee had voted for the Finley Resolution regarding Bishop Andrew and four had voted against it. Under a resolution offered by J. B. McFerrin and Tobias Spicer, the committee was instructed, "Provided they cannot in their judgment devise a plan for an amicable adjustment of the difficulties now existing in the church, on the subject of slavery, to devise, if possible, a constitutional plan for a mutual and friendly division of the church."<sup>13</sup> The resolution of instruction was passed after the Conference had refused to delete the word "*constitutional*."\*

On June 6, The Protest, a voluminous document, was read by Dr. Bascom on behalf of the thirteen Conferences and parts of Conferences in the slaveholding territory. The Protest was signed by several delegates not in slaveholding territory—two from Illinois, one from Ohio, four from Philadelphia, and two from New Jersey. Some of these, at least, were originally from the South. The majority faction was much aggrieved by the manner in which the Protest arraigned its action touching Bishop Andrew, and a "statement" in reply was ordered to be prepared for entry upon the Journal.

On June 7, Dr. Paine, on behalf of the Committee of Nine, submitted the following report:

"Whereas, a declaration has been presented to this General Conference, with the signatures of fifty-one delegates of the body, from thirteen Annual Confer-

<sup>13</sup> *The Journal of the General Conference, 1844*, p. 111.

\* Attention is called to the fact that Dr. J. T. Peck, in the *Methodist Review* for April, 1870, disputes the refusal of the Conference to delete the word "*constitutional*." But the record shows to the contrary and as it had stood apparently unchallenged for a quarter of a century, the author does not feel that great importance should be attached to an unsupported recollection.



ences in the slaveholding States, representing that, for various reasons enumerated, the objects and purposes of the Christian ministry of the Church organization cannot be successfully accomplished by them under the jurisdiction of this General Conference as now constituted; and

“Whereas, in the event of a separation, a contingency to which the declaration asks attention as not improbable, we esteem it the duty of this General Conference to meet the emergency with Christian kindness and the strictest equity; therefore,

“Resolved, by the delegates of the several Annual Conferences in General Conference assembled,

“1. That, should the Annual Conferences in the slaveholding States find it necessary to unite in a distinct ecclesiastical connection, the following rule shall be observed with regard to the Northern boundary of such connection:—All the societies, stations and Conferences adhering to the Church in the South, by a vote of a majority of the members of said societies, stations, and Conferences, shall remain under the unmolested pastoral care of the Southern Church; and the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church shall in no wise attempt to organize churches or societies within the limits of the Church, South, nor shall they attempt to exercise any pastoral oversight therein; it being understood that the ministry of the South reciprocally observe the same rule in relation to stations, societies and Conferences, adhering by vote of a majority to the Methodist Episcopal Church; provided also, that this rule shall apply only to societies, stations, and Conferences bordering on the line of division, and not to interior charges, which shall in all cases be left to the care of that Church within whose territory they are situated.

“2. That ministers, local and traveling, of every grade and office in the Methodist Episcopal Church,



may as they prefer, remain in the Church, or, without blame, attach themselves to the Church, South.

"3. Resolved, by the delegates of all the Annual Conferences in General Conference assembled, That we recommend to all the Annual Conferences, at their first approaching session, to authorize a change of the sixth restrictive article, so that the first clause shall read thus: 'They shall not appropriate the produce of the Book Concern, nor of the Chartered Fund, to any other purpose than for the benefit of the traveling, super-numerary, superannuated, and worn-out preachers, their wives, widows, and children, and to such other purposes as may be determined upon by vote of two-thirds of the members of the General Conference.'

"4. That whenever the Annual Conferences, by vote of three-fourths of all their members voting on the third resolution, shall have concurred in the recommendation to alter the sixth restrictive article, the Agents at New York and Cincinnati shall, and they are hereby authorized and directed to deliver over to any authorized agent or appointee of the Church, South, should one be organized, all notes and book accounts against the ministers, church members, or citizens, within the boundaries, with authority to collect the same for the sole use of the Southern Church, and that the said Agents also convey to aforesaid agent or appointee of the South, all the real estate, and assign to him all the property, including presses, stock, and all right and interest connected with the printing establishments at Charleston, Richmond, and Nashville, which now belong to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

"5. That when the Annual Conferences shall have approved the aforesaid change in the sixth restrictive article, there shall be transferred to the above agent for the Southern Church so much of the capital and produce of the Methodist Book Concern as will, with

the notes, book accounts, presses, etc., mentioned in the last resolution, bear the same proportion to the whole property of said Concern that the traveling preachers in the Southern Church shall bear to all the traveling ministers in the Methodist Episcopal Church; the division to be made on the basis of the number of traveling preachers in the forthcoming Minutes.

“6. That the above transfer shall be in the form of annual payments of \$25,000 per annum, and specifically in stock of the Book Concern, and in Southern notes and accounts due the establishment, and accruing after the first transfer mentioned above; and until the payments are made, the Southern Church shall share in the net profits of the Book Concern, in the proportion that the amount due them, or in arrears, bears to all the property of the Concern.

“7. That Nathan Bangs, George Peck, and James B. Finley be, and they are hereby appointed commissioners to act in concert with the same number of commissioners appointed by the Southern organization, (should one be formed), to estimate the amount which will fall due to the South by the preceding rule, and to have full power to carry into effect the whole arrangements proposed with regard to the division of the property, should the separation take place. And if by any means a vacancy occurs in this board of commissioners, the Book Concern at New York shall fill such vacancy.

“8. That whenever any agents of the Southern Church are clothed with legal authority or corporate power to act in the premises, the Agents at New York are hereby authorized and directed to act in concert with said Southern agents, so as to give the provisions of these resolutions a legally binding force.

“9. That all the property of the Methodist Episcopal Church in meeting houses, parsonages, colleges, schools, Conference funds, cemeteries, and of every kind within

the limits of the Southern organization, shall be forever free from any claim set up on the part of the Methodist Episcopal Church, so far as this resolution can be of force in the premises.

"10. That the Church so formed in the South shall have a common right to use all the copyrights in possession of the Book Concern at New York and Cincinnati, at the time of the settlement by the commissioners.

"11. That the Book Agents at New York be directed to make such compensation to the Conference, South, for their dividend from the Chartered Fund, as the commissioners above provided for shall agree upon.

"12. That the Bishops be respectfully requested to lay that part of this report requiring the action of the Annual Conferences before them as soon as possible, beginning with the New York Conference."<sup>14</sup>

The report was adopted after the change of a single word in the first resolution to make it read "*Annual Conferences*," instead of "*Delegates*." The motion for making this change was made by Dr. Paine, and the paper was adopted by an overwhelming vote.<sup>15</sup> But some time after the Conference adjourned, there developed at the North very decided opposition to the "Plan of Separation." It was held that the General Conference had no authority for dividing the Church—a contention which may have had some color of reason, but in which the wish may have been father to the thought. A precedent had already been established, however, for divisions to meet political necessities. As a matter of fact the American Church was set off to meet a condition created by the independence of the United States; and in 1828, the General Conference authorized a division, contingent upon the vote of the Conference in Upper Canada. Dr. Paine, chairman of

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135-137.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 131-134.



the "Committee of Nine" which drew up the "Plan of Separation," was one of the committee of five which matured the action for setting up the Church in Upper Canada.. Following is the Report signed by Dr. Fisk, the chairman, and inserted in the Journal of the General Conference of 1832.

*"Resolved* by the delegates of the Annual Conferences in General Conference assembled, that, whereas the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America has heretofore been extended over the ministers and members in connection with said Church in the Province of Upper Canada, by mutual agreement, and by the consent and desire of our brethren in that province; and whereas this General Conference is satisfactorily assured that our brethren in the said province, under peculiar and pressing circumstances, do now desire to organize themselves into a distinct Methodist Episcopal Church, in friendly relations with the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, therefore, be it resolved, and it is hereby resolved by the delegates of the Annual Conferences in General Conference assembled:—

"1. If the Annual Conference in Upper Canada, at its ensuing session or any succeeding session previously to the next General Conference, shall definitely determine on this course, and elect a general superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in that province, this General Conference do hereby authorize any one or more of the general superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, with the assistance of any two or more elders, to ordain such general superintendent for the said Church in Upper Canada, provided always, that nothing herein contained be contrary to or inconsistent with the laws existing in the said province; and provided that no such general superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in



Upper Canada, or any of his successors in office, shall at any time exercise any ecclesiastical jurisdiction whatever in any part of the United States, or of the territories thereof; and provided also, that this article shall be expressly ratified and agreed to by the said Canada Annual Conference, before any such ordination shall take place.

"2. That the delegate who has been elected by this General Conference to attend the ensuing Annual Conference of the British Wesleyan Methodist Connexion be, and hereby is, instructed to express to that body the earnest and affectionate desire of this General Conference that the arrangement made with that connexion in relation to the labours of their missionaries in Upper Canada may still be maintained and observed.

"3. That our brethren and friends, ministers or others in Upper Canada shall, at all times, at their request, be furnished with any of our books and periodical publications on the same terms with those by which our agents are regulated in furnishing them in the United States, and until there shall be an adjustment of any claims which the Canada Church may name. On this connexion, the Book Agents shall divide to the said Canada Church an equal proportion of any annual dividend which may be made from the Book Concern to the several Annual Conferences respectively; provided that however, the aforesaid dividend shall be apportioned to the Canada Church only as long as they may continue to support and patronize our Book Concern, as in the past.

"Respectfully submitted as agreed.

W. FISK, Chairman.

"Pittsburg, May 26, 1828."<sup>16</sup>

These two documents have been given in full, because of their importance and for the sake of comparing their

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 1832, pp. 406, 407.

contents. It is manifest that a common thought and a common procedure run through both documents. In both instruments, the division is made to depend entirely upon the action of the Annual Conferences in the sections proposed to be set off. In both cases there was to be a distinct severance of authority, from the episcopacy down. In both cases there was a confession of property interests to be submitted to the Annual Conferences under the "Sixth restrictive article" of the Discipline. In neither case was the modification voted; but in the Canada case, notwithstanding the failure to secure a modification of the restriction, Dr. Paine, as a member of the Committee on Canada Claims in the General Conference in 1836, helped to effect a compromise by which the claim was settled. The plan of settlement was to allow to the Canada Church special discounts on books and periodicals, to continue over a period of sixteen years.<sup>17</sup>

Dr. Paine's connection with the setting up of a separate church for Canada, and the fact that he was chairman of the "Committee of Nine" which drew up the Plan of Separation in 1844, would naturally lead one to think that he had a large share in shaping the latter instrument. But he was strongly opposed to separation, except in a jurisdictional Conference. He proposed an adjustment which was rejected by the Southern delegates; and he made a final effort in the Committee of Nine which failed also.<sup>18</sup> It has now been established, however, that the Report was largely the work of another. In a letter written to Mr. Hugh McCollom of Augusta, Kentucky, under date of September 30, 1845, and apparently a reply to criticisms of the course pursued by him, Dr. William Winans said: "This declaration (of fifty-one Southern delegates) led to the appointment of the Committee of Nine, who

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 1836, pp. 460-463.

<sup>18</sup> *The Disruption of the M. E. Church*, Myers, pp. 124, 125.

framed the *Plan of Separation*. Of this committee, I was a member. The plan of separation was almost wholly framed by Bishop Hamline, and in its provisions, I concurred, both in the Committee and in the Conference. The Annual Conferences, and nearly all the members in the South, whose voice was heard on the subject, fully confirmed the conviction avowed by the Southern delegates in the General Conference; and consequently a Convention of Southern delegates met at Louisville, and, in *perfect accordance with the plan of separation, framed by Bishop Hamline and advocated by Dr. Elliott on the floor of the General Conference*, declared themselves and those they represented separated from the General Conference of the M. E. Church, and organized themselves and those they represented into the M. E. Church, South.”<sup>19</sup>

After the momentous step taken in the adoption of the Plan of Separation, events on the Southern side, as Dr. Winans’ letter implies, hastened to a consummation of the division contingently authorized. The Southern delegates were accurately informed as to opinion and feeling in the South; and before leaving New York, they met and decided upon a plan of action and prepared an Address to the Conferences in the slaveholding States.<sup>20</sup> The Address proposed a delegated Convention to meet in Louisville, Kentucky, May 1, 1845; and for the delegates to be instructed by their Conferences as to their desires for or against organization under the Plan of Separation. It was charged at the time that the Southern delegates had acted with precipitate haste, and had shown a determination to disrupt the Church; but those charges are of little importance now. The wisdom and sagacity of Southern leaders saved the Annual Conferences of the South

<sup>19</sup> Copy of a letter of Dr. Winans to Mr. Hugh McCollom in papers of Bishop Chas. B. Galloway.

<sup>20</sup> *The Organization of the M. E. Church, South*, pp. 104, 105.

from the disorder that would have resulted from the excitement of the hour, and from the chaos that would have been produced by an irresponsible type of guidance.

Beginning with the Kentucky Conference, action on the Plan of Separation followed in the order of the episcopal visitation for the year. Kentucky, Missouri, and Holston, border Conferences, were the first to approve the Plan and elect delegates to the Louisville Convention. The Holston Conference proposed alternative plans which were joined in by no other Conference. The Texas Conference repudiated the vote of John Clarke against Bishop Andrew, and expressed the hope that division before 1848 might be avoided if possible. The other Conferences approved, in most instances without a dissenting vote.

The Virginia Conference declared that it did not propose to dissolve its connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church, but with the General Conference of that Church. After asserting its right to an equitable share of the property belonging to the whole Church, it said: "Nevertheless, our delegates to the convention to be held in Louisville, Kentucky, in May, 1845, are hereby instructed not to allow the question of property to enter into the calculation whether or not we shall exist as a separate organization."

The North Carolina Conference said: "The course of the late General Conference demanded a submission on the part of the ministers in the slaveholding Conferences, which the Discipline did not require and the institutions of the South absolutely forbade."<sup>21</sup> Other Conferences made pronouncements of like import, but these are sufficient to show the attitude and feeling of the South touching the action of the General Conference of 1844.

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 140, 141, 142.



The Louisville Convention met according to call, on May 1, 1845. Bishops Soule, Andrew, and Morris were present, but Bishop Morris declined to take part in the proceedings. An organization committee, of two members from each Annual Conference represented, was appointed; and one of the first resolutions introduced was to instruct the Committee on Organization to inquire if anything had transpired to indicate the possibility of maintaining the unity of the Church under the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>22</sup> The report of the Committee on Organization was read by Dr. Bascom, on May 15, and it concluded with a series of seven resolutions. The first resolution, dissolving the connection with the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was passed with only three dissenting votes—Gunn, Taylor and Harrison, all of Kentucky. The report as a whole was adopted with only two dissenting votes, and five absentees. An additional report providing for the session of the first General Conference, in Petersburg, Virginia, to begin May 1, 1846, and other details for completing the organization, was submitted and adopted.<sup>23</sup> The Convention adjourned on May 19, and with its adjournment the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was an accomplished fact.

It is almost unbelievable that a document, as hastily constructed, the outgrowth of such an excited state of mind and feeling, and of such momentous and far-reaching consequences, could have been as legally perfect and impregnable as the Plan of Separation proved to be. Probably no other church contest ever aroused such general interest among the American people, or presented more curious alignments, or such crossing of natural borders of interest and affiliation. Bishop

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

Matthew Simpson pointed out the fact that on the Northern side, Durbin of Kentucky, Finley of North Carolina, and Cartwright of Virginia were arrayed against Bascom of New York, Soule of Maine, and Winans of Pennsylvania for the South.<sup>24</sup> The reports and papers of the Southern Annual Conferences, responding to the provisions of the Plan of Separation, show an almost unerring precision in every pronouncement and step of the progress toward the setting up of a separate ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Everything was carefully adjusted to the *exact terms* and *limitations* prescribed by the document which might be styled, not inaptly, the Magna Charta of Southern Methodism. Whatever may have been the reason for this carefulness, it is manifest that the action of the Church, South, was shaped with a definite end in view; and this carefully considered course is a great tribute to the generalship which steered the South through the long and bitter struggle which followed.

The reception given the new unit of Methodism was not so cordial and unanimous at the North as had been the vote for the Plan of Separation under which it was set up. The Plan was attacked in everything from its caption to its constitutionality. It is true that "Plan of Separation" was not the caption of the report of the Committee of Nine; but the specific instruction under which the report was made, used the words, "a constitutional plan for a mutual division of the Church." It may be admitted that the constitutional authority of the General Conference to divide the Church was a moot question; but the ingenuity of Jesuitical casuistry would not be sufficient to prove that the General Conference of 1844 did not intentionally provide for such a contingency. Unfortunately it could not be said of either North or South: "There were green and

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<sup>24</sup> *Life of Bishop Matthew Simpson*, Crooks, p. 242.

refreshing spots in the desert of hostility and rancour." Northern publications characterized the new Church as schismatics and secessionists and the periodicals of the South replied in kind. It is altogether possible that more trouble grew out of the criticisms, for which both sides were responsible, than was caused by the resolution respecting Bishop Andrew. The minds of men North and South were confused and it was easy to aggravate the situation by the assertion of hasty and ill-considered judgments. In the course of time, the Supreme Court of the United States gave unassailable validity to the corporate existence of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; but no court decision could heal the wounds which were inflicted by the bitter words of the contestants.

As a Southern man, the author makes no defence of slavery, and neither does he accept the implication that the institution is a sole and solitary sin of the South. We deplore the fact that a divided church, secession, the War Between the States, Reconstruction and race attrition are eternally in the foreground of the history of an institution which was without a single redeeming virtue. On both sides, we have reached an eminence from which we can observe more calmly and speak more judiciously than was possible ninety years ago. We of the South have come to realize that it was not just to charge the leadership of the North with casuistry and double-dealing on the subject of slavery; for, in that section, the Church had been badgered and bludgeoned at quarterly and Annual Conferences until it was almost unbearable. Despite the humiliating attacks made upon them, the Bishops consistently refused to put to vote resolutions offered in Annual Conferences, on the subject of slavery, until abolitionist agitations filled the minds of Methodist people with a distrust of the leadership of the Church, and with



doubts as to Methodist sincerity in dealing with what the anti-slavery element characterized as the sin of the age.<sup>25</sup>

The amazing fact connected with the Conference of 1844, is that, after the bitterness of the desperate struggle that had occupied practically the entire session, it should have been able to arrive at such a liberal and Christian adjustment, when the church was about to be rent in twain. Whatever impeachments may be brought against Northern men for their treatment of Bishop Andrew, it must be said that the last act in that lamentable struggle will stand out in the history of the Christian Church, as a memorial to their sense of justice and equity; and it will abide as an incontrovertible evidence of their good will as respects the South. To be sure, the Plan was repudiated by the General Conference of 1848; but nearly two-thirds of those who had voted the Plan of Separation had failed of election in 1848. Among those who were not present in 1848 were Bangs, Olin, Sargent, Spicer, Haughteling, Ames, Spaulding and many others. The rescinding resolution was adopted by a vote of 132 to 10; but only about twenty-five of the forty-one members who had supported the Plan of Separation in 1844 reversed their position in 1848.<sup>26</sup>

Much has been said and written about the censure of Bishop Andrew, but even there we can find a bowl with a golden rim. As has been observed already, probably very few people, familiar with Methodist law, would undertake to defend the legality of the procedure in his case; but the desire of the North to do right is registered again and again. They refused to charge him with crime—even those who denounced slavery as the epitome of wickedness. The sentence under which

<sup>25</sup> *The Grounds of Secession from the M. E. Church*, Scott, pp. 154, 155, 170.

<sup>26</sup> *The Disruption of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, Myers, p. 144. (See also *Journals of the General Conferences of 1844 and 1848*).



he was virtually deposed could scarcely have been couched in less offensive terms. After the Finley substitute had been passed, two efforts were made, by different men, to soften it by interpretation. Both efforts failed, but what the majority refused to do by direct resolution, they did with poorer grace in the unparliamentary reply to the Protest. There they declared that the action against Bishop Andrew was neither "judicial nor punitive." The Conference ordered that his name should stand in the list of Bishops in the hymn book, and the provision for his support was to remain unchanged.

The report of the Committee on Organization in the Louisville Convention made use of a statement worthy of being preserved for a day of better understanding and a calmer judgment of its truth: "The controversy of a large and rapidly increasing portion of the North, is not so much with the *South* as with the *Discipline*, because it tolerates slavery *in any form*, whatever, and should the Southern Conferences remain under the present common jurisdiction, or any slaveholding portion of the South unite in the Northern connection in the event of division, it requires very little discernment to see that *this controversy* will never *cease* until every slaveholder or every Abolitionist is out of the connection."<sup>27</sup> As we look back upon the struggle of 1844 and after, that would appear to have been a discriminating appraisal of the whole situation and prospect.

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<sup>27</sup> *History of the Organization of the M. E. Church, South.* p. 230.



## CHAPTER IX

### READJUSTMENT

**I**N a sense it might be said of the disruption of the Methodist Episcopal Church: "It had no authors, no leaders, and no guides." It was an explosion for which the opposing constituencies had made no plans; and, on both sides, the efforts at recovery represented a similar disordered and unplanned movement to save the Church from ruin which seemed imminent. It might be possible to deal with the events of this chapter in a more dispassionate manner, without a review of the distressing details of the General Conference, the doings of which were echoed and re-echoed until the most frontier settlement in the land was filled with a spirit of partisanship and distrust whose baleful effects have not been eliminated even until this day. There are certain facts to which reference must be made, however, and we refer to them simply for the sake of making the connection clear.

The show of strength made by the anti-slavery wing of the Church, on the appeal of Rev. Francis A. Harding, had the effect of emboldening that faction; and, in a way, committed the Church, North, to a course of action which it had not meditated and for which it was not prepared. This interpretation seems to be borne out by the fact that the leadership, such as there was, fell to a group who were not the best qualified, nor the most dependable men on that side. The leadership of the period, which most of all needed clear seeing and clear thinking, fell to those who were not able to lift

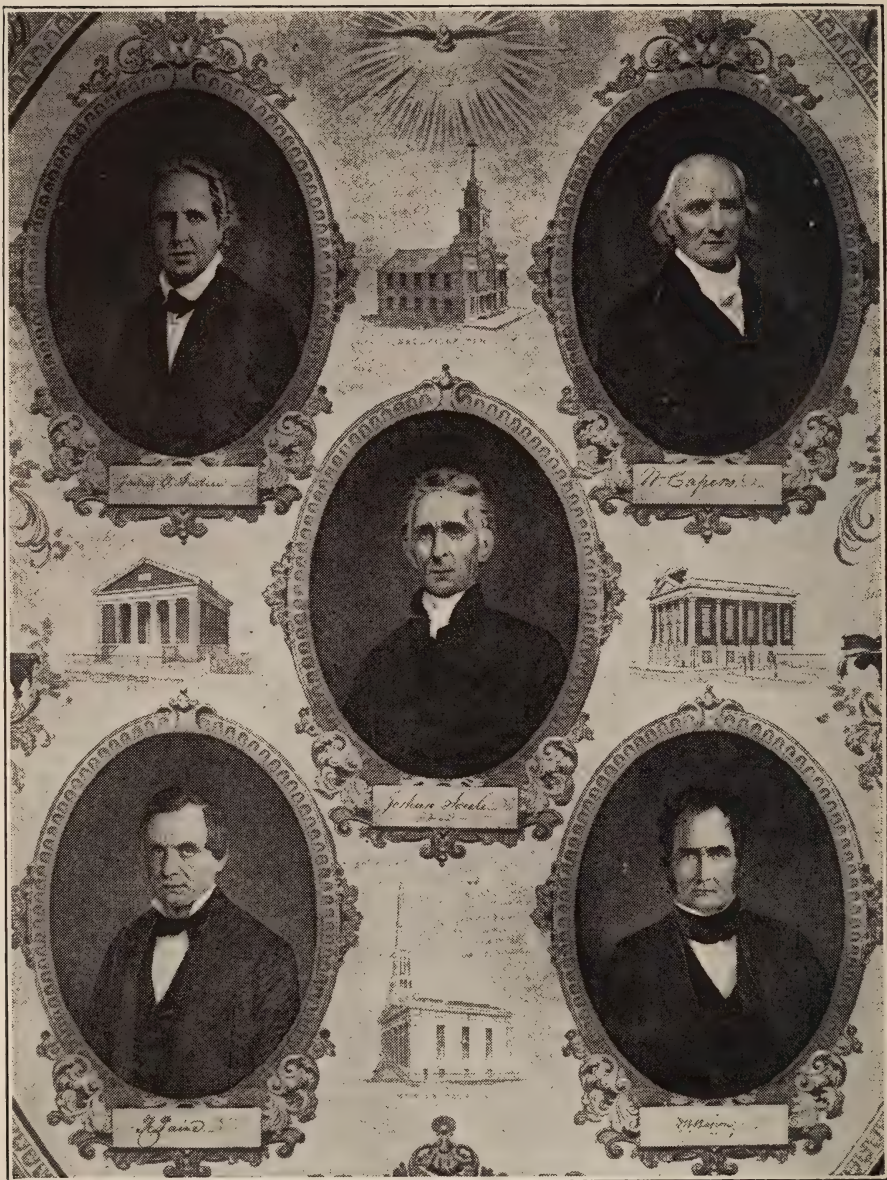
the action of the Church above the level of a partisan contest; and the years which followed witnessed a constant deploying of forces to meet attack, rather than a constructive effort for the solution of difficulty. The quadrennium which followed 1844 was unfortunate in its leadership, and as a consequence, the General Conference of 1848 was injudiciously *managed*.

After the General Conference of 1844, we deal with a period in which men were supposed to have settled down in the composure of their own thoughts to meet the terms and the consequences of the overwhelming declaration of the General Conference. We must think of anything that was done as resulting from a more deliberate and meditated purpose upon the part of those concerned; for the element of emergency had been removed and the pressure of disaster was no longer a factor in what was done or said. But the tragedy is in the fact that the Church did not recover its judicial poise; but it went forth to meet the new issues with all the feeling aroused by discussion in the General Conference; and with the added resentment of what must have seemed to the triumphant faction to have been a surrender of the victory that had been achieved on the slavery issue. It is needless to say that it was an unfortunate combination for that time.

We approach the study of this period with the assumption that the Finley resolution was passed with the distinct understanding that it would probably result in the dismemberment of the Church. Such was clearly reflected in the discussions on both sides of the controversy, and the unanimity of the delegates on the report of the Committee of Nine shows that the mind of the Conference was fully made up to the result which followed. The Church, North, had reached a state of feeling of such intensity that if it had yielded, it would have been consumed by the fires of opposition







FIRST FIVE BISHOPS  
Methodist Episcopal Church, South

which would have been kindled against it. On the other hand, if the South had yielded, it would have meant irretrievable disaster for the Church in that section. So when argument against the wisdom of the Plan of Separation has been completely exhausted, it can still be said that its adoption was a triumph of irenic statesmanship on both sides. And looking back upon those fateful days of controversy and strife, one is inclined to say that it was a great pity that the action of 1844 might not have been accepted by all sides as the final settlement, not of the question of slavery, but of the internal problem which had disturbed the Church from the beginning. But, alas, such was not to be the case.

The South was charged with acting in precipitate haste, and thereby accepting responsibility for the dismemberment of the Church. To that indictment, it may be answered with perfect frankness, the South should not have been expected to take the stupid course of leaving to a weak, inflamed, designing and irresponsible leadership matters which involved its very life, as well as its social and political institutions. In laying plans for the inevitable result of the action that had been taken, the Southern delegates established for themselves a credential of wisdom and generalship of which no generation need be ashamed. Their action had the effect of unifying and solidifying all factions, and the avoidance of damaging cross-currents of thought and discussion. In the Methodist Church Property Suit, Mr. George Wood of the counsel for the Methodist Episcopal Church, gave good reason for the Plan of Separation when he said: "That unfortunate question of abolitionism—which has been for the last fifteen or twenty years in this country, Pandora's box to let out every evil—has wrought them (the South) to a pitch of excitement which forms, if not a justifi-



cation, at least some excuse for the precipitancy with which they have acted; and therefore allowances ought to be made on both sides of this question, and no doubt in the spirit of concord they will be made."<sup>1</sup>

It was said also that the South should have waited for the manifestation of a benevolence on the part of the North, before seeking to enforce its property rights by a suit at law. To that it should be said that no self-respecting people would consent to be treated as the leprous mendicants who waited at the gates of the beleaguered City of Samaria until a miraculous intervention caused the desertion of an armed camp. It is true that the General Conference of 1848 suggested arbitration as a peradventure;<sup>2</sup> but the very suggestion implied humiliation; and, in asking the courts to do what the Annual Conferences had refused to do by not permitting the change of the "sixth restrictive article," the Church, South, adopted the only course consistent with honor and self-respect.

Against every conciliatory suggestion it remains to be said that the Church, North, took the course of a denial of the legitimacy of the separation. It is true that the time for argument of its *legality*, except as to the property rights, was past; and the majority faction might have profited by the celebrated dictum of Lord Chief Justice Mansfield, whose comment upon Wesleyan separation from the Church of England, was: "Ordination is separation." The records of the General Conference may furnish entertainment for the curious, but division was *an accomplished fact*. The General Conference of 1848 did four things. 1. It refused to enter into fraternal relations with the Church, South. 2. It denied the constitutionality of the Plan of Separation, on the ground that it was an

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1 *Methodist Church Property Case*, R. Sutton, Reporter, p. 323.

2 *Journal of the General Conference*, 1848, pp. 94, 97



unauthorized exercise of power. 3. It rescinded the action of 1844, and such other acts of previous General Conferences as might be necessary to make the rescinding action consistent. 4. It sought to place the blame upon the South for the violation of the boundary stipulations of the Plan of Separation—a thing which was unnecessary to be done, if the plan was illegal and void.

The Southern delegates left New York, the seat of the General Conference of 1844, with the great words of Bishop Hamline, the author of the Plan of Separation, ringing in their ears. In the course of the debate on the Plan, he said: "The Book Concern is chartered in behalf of the General Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States; and if they did separate until only one State remained, still Methodism would remain the same, and it would still be the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States. . . . The resolution goes on to make provision, if the Annual Conferences concur, for the security and efficiency of the Southern Conferences, for the Methodist Church would embrace them in its fraternal arms, tendering to them fraternal feelings and the temporalities to which they were entitled. And the committee thought that it could not be objected to on the ground of constitutionality. He for one would wish to have his name recorded affirming them to be brethren, if they found they must separate. God forbid that they should go as an arm torn out of the body, leaving the point of juncture all gory and ghastly! But let them go as brethren 'beloved in the Lord,' and let us hear their voice responsive claiming us for brethren—let us go preach Jesus to them, and let them come preach Jesus to us."<sup>3</sup> Those noble sentiments of Bishop Hamline reflect great credit upon his heart, but they did not accord with the

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3 *Journal of the General Conference, 1844, (Debates)* p. 223.

course of events which followed; and they did not establish his ability to forecast the action of a great Church, blinded by passion and smarting under the wounds of disappointment. Every proposition was bitterly contested. The division was classed as a "secession;" a lawsuit ensued over the "temporalities;" and the fraternal messenger of the Southern Church was refused "embrace" in "fraternal arms."

The first General Conference of the newly organized Methodist Episcopal Church, South, met in Petersburg, Virginia, May 1, 1846. It accepted the statements and the fraternal spirit of Bishop Hamline; and Dr. Lovick Pierce was appointed to bear fraternal greetings to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which met in Pittsburg on May 1, 1848. Unhappily, the mind of the North was not reflected in the splendid sentiments of the leader whose wisdom and guiding hand had shaped the Plan of Separation. The Conference assembled at Pittsburg had many new faces; it had vastly different thoughts on the subject of separation; and it set itself to retrace the steps of those who had shaped events in 1844. Dr. Pierce made the journey to Pittsburg, but with the feeling that he would not be received as the representative of the Church, South; and he so expressed himself to Dr. Dixon, the fraternal delegate from the British Wesleyan Connexion, with whom he traveled from Baltimore to the seat of the Conference.<sup>4</sup>

Upon Dr. Pierce's arrival, he waived formality aside and laid before the Conference at once the object of his mission, in the brief but well-conceived note which follows:

"To the Bishops and Members of the General Conference of the M. E. Church:

"Reverend and Dear Brethren:—The General Con-

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<sup>4</sup> *Journal of the General Conference, M. E. Church, South, 1850, p. 192.*

ference of the M. E. Church, South, at their session in May, 1846, appointed me their delegate to bear to you their Christian salutation, and through me to offer to you the establishment of fraternal relations and intercourse between us, as two legitimate portions of the great Wesleyan family. And as my state of mind must be one of painful suspense until your wish shall be declared, I respectfully ask your earliest attention to the object of my mission,

"Very respectfully yours, in the unity of Wesleyan Methodism.

"L. PIERCE,

"Delegate from the M. E. Church, South."

It is not necessary to discuss the refusal of Dr. Pierce as fraternal messenger of the Southern Church, except to say that the reasons for the action were not personal, but were couched in the rather cryptic phrase, "questions and difficulties." Dr. Pierce did not hasten from the seat of the Conference, as some might have done, but he remained sufficiently long to leave it without excuse in the matter, and he sent in a copy of the action of the Conference of the Southern Church in 1846, which had been certified by Bishop Soule, and he accompanied it with the following note:

*"Reverend and Dear Brethren—I have received two extracts from your Journal of the 4th and 5th instant. From these extracts I learn you decline receiving me in my proper character, as the accredited delegate of the M. E. Church, South, and only invite me to a seat within the bar as due me on account of my private and personal merits. These considerations I shall appreciate, and will reciprocate them in all the private and social walks of life. But within the bar of the General Conference I can only be known in my official character.*

*"You will therefore regard this communication as final on the part of of the M. E. Church, South. She*

can never renew the offer of fraternal relations between the two great bodies of Wesleyan Methodists in the United States. But the proposition can be renewed at any time, either now, or hereafter, by the M. E. Church. And if ever made upon the basis of the Plan of Separation, as adopted by the General Conference of 1844, the Church, South, will cordially entertain the proposition.

"With sentiments of deep regret, and with feelings of disappointed hopes, I am yours, in Christian fellowship,

"L. PIERCE,

"Delegate from the M. E. Church, South."

"Pittsburg, May 9, 1848."<sup>5</sup>

In 1850 the Bishops, in their address to the General Conference of the Southern Church, said: "At the General Conference held in Pittsburg, in 1848, our Northern friends pursued such a course of action as destroyed all hope on the part of the Southern Church, that she should either be able to obtain justice, or that fraternal relations would be established between the two Connections."<sup>6</sup> The gloomy forebodings of the Bishops as to the prospect for Methodist peace and good will proved to be all too well founded. From the disruption in 1844, to the meeting of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1874, no word of fraternity was exchanged between North and South; and no approach to the matter, following the rejection of Dr. Pierce in 1848, was made until 1869, when the College of Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church sent Bishops Janes and Simpson to confer with the Southern Bishop at St. Louis, on the subject of a reunion of the two great branches of Episcopal Methodism. At that time the estranged sons of Wesley addressed themselves to the healing of the wounds of

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 188-190.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.



ecclesiastical conflict, to which the gruesome and gaping wounds of war had been added.

The approach of the Bishops of the Northern Church found a cordial response on the part of the Church, South; but the question of reunion was not to be considered at that time. Dr. Lovick Pierce referred to the visit of Bishops Janes and Simpson as, "A star of hope rising above the gloomy horizon."<sup>7</sup> The Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church said in 1865: "The great cause which had led to the separation from us of both the Wesleyan Methodists and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has passed away, and we trust that the day is not far distant when there shall be but one organization, which shall embrace the whole Methodist family in the United States." That statement placed the Church, South, in the same class with the Wesleyan Methodists of New England who simply withdrew, and the South was in no mood to accept such implication. And if Bishops Janes and Simpson imagined that there were no "questions and difficulties" to be adjusted at the South, they were in for a rude awakening when they met the Southern Bishops at St. Louis.

The Southern Bishops made it clear that the question of fraternal relations would have to be taken up where the effort on their part had left it in 1848; and that, "The separation was by compact and mutual, and that nearer approaches to each other can be conducted, with a hope of successful issue, only on this basis."<sup>8</sup> Since Bishops Janes and Simpson were without authority from the General Conference to negotiate with the South, except for reunion, they made no reply to the statement of the Southern Bishops; but in 1870, Bishop Janes and Dr. Harris visited the Southern General Conference at Memphis. Upon that visit, they were rep-

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<sup>7</sup> *Life of Bishop Matthew Simpson*, Crooks, p. 436.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 432.

representing a commission formed by the General Conference of 1868 to negotiate union with other branches of Methodism, but still without specific instructions from the General Conference touching the matter of the establishing of fraternal relations between the two Churches. The Southern Church did not feel that it was a properly accredited deputation, but the General Conference passed a resolution declaring its position, "In reference to any overtures which may proceed from that Church having in them an official and proper recognition of that body."<sup>9</sup> Accordingly the General Conferences of 1872, of the Northern Church, passed resolutions which, after reciting the facts said: "To place ourselves in the truly fraternal relations toward our Southern brethren which the sentiments of our people demand, and to prepare the way for the opening of formal fraternity with them, be it hereby

*"Resolved*, That this General Conference will appoint a delegation consisting of two ministers and one layman, to convey fraternal greetings to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South."<sup>10</sup> In pursuance of this action, Doctors Albert S. Hunt and Charles H. Fowler, and General Clinton B. Fisk brought the fraternal greetings of the Methodist Episcopal Church to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in General Conference session at Louisville, Kentucky, on May 8, 1874. Thus began a relationship which had been deferred for a generation.

The action provided for the sending of two ministers and one layman as fraternal messengers to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1874. The Northern Church approached the South under the most delicate and difficult circumstances that could have been developed. Dr. Edward H. Myers quoted the words of Dr. Elliott to the effect that the refusal to hear the

<sup>9</sup> *The Disruption of the M. E. Church*, Myers, p. 191.

<sup>10</sup> *Journal of the General Conference, M. E. Church, 1872*, p. 403.

fraternal greetings of Dr. Pierce was a defensive step. If he had been admitted, it would imply that the South was right in its course, and would make further adjustments impossible.<sup>11</sup> Whether Dr. Elliott's interpretation is correct or not is of minor importance here. We only refer to it as indicating something of the backgrounds of an approach to the setting up of fraternal relations with the Church, South. On this point we leave the subject with a quotation from the biographer of Bishop Matthew Simpson, who said: "After the soreness which we felt when we discovered, in 1848, that in agreeing to the Plan of Separation we had been outmaneuvered, outwitted, and, as we said, duped; after repealing the plan as null and void; after having declared for nearly thirty years that Southern Methodism was a secession, and not legitimately derived from the parent stock; after having fought out, as Methodist citizens, by thousands and ten thousands, in the national armies, the one issue which had divided both Church and State, we asked for a restored fraternity with the brethren from whom we had been long severed."<sup>12</sup> What a volume of hurt, of courage, and of hope are gathered into that summary of three decades of disunion and strife!

The second step taken, at the General Conference of 1848, was the action rescinding the Plan of Separation. Bishop Simpson's biographer said: "The General Conference of 1848 met in a state of mind which might be very moderately described as bordering on exasperation. The forms of courtesy were, however, carefully observed."<sup>13</sup> The movement for revoking the plan was doubtless accelerated by the bitter feelings which had been developed on both sides, and no one would undertake to justify now what was done and said under the

<sup>11</sup> *The Disruption of the M. E. Church*, Myers, p., 142.

<sup>12</sup> *Life of Bishop Matthew Simpson*, Crooks, pp. 434, 435.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 247.

heat and passion of that day. Under a resolution offered by Dr. Simpson, the General Conference formally revoked the action which had been taken by an overwhelming majority of the General Conference of 1844, and which involved the rights of the entire Southern Church.<sup>14</sup> The General Conference also passed a resolution rescinding the action of 1840 on the Westmoreland petition, giving as the reason the fact that the resolution "is liable to misconstruction, and has been misconstrued greatly to the prejudice of our beloved Methodism."<sup>15</sup> Such was probably the feeling of the delegates to the Conference of 1848, but we can not believe that the rescission of a resolution, after eight years and under such circumstances, was wise ecclesiastical policy, and it was certainly not calculated to promote good will between the antagonistic Methodisms.

It was charged that the South had acted with precipitate haste, thereby indicating the determination of the leadership of that section to disrupt the Church, and the feeling was such as to promote such action; but no haste of the Southern delegates ran ahead of the demands of the Southern people. On June 8, 1844, two days before the close of the memorable session of the General Conference, a meeting of citizens in the State of Alabama, held for some local political purpose, passed resolutions saying that they had observed the proceedings of the Conference "with intense interest and painful anxiety," and they urged the clergy of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the South "to take immediate measures for secession," assuring them "of warm sympathy and unalterable support of the whole Southern States of every sect and denomination."<sup>16</sup> That expression was made before they knew that a Plan of Separation had been adopted.

<sup>14</sup> *The Disruption of M. E. Church*, Myers, p. 147.

<sup>15</sup> *Journal of General Conference, M. E. Church, 1848*, p. 125.

<sup>16</sup> *Disruption of M. E. Church*, Myers, p. 133.



We have already referred to the fact that Virginia instructed its delegates to the Louisville Convention not to allow the question of property to enter into the question of the organization of a separate Church. Scores of meetings were held throughout the South, beginning before the adjournment of the General Conference of 1844, letters poured in upon the delegates at New York, opinion was already crystallized and the issue of separation was fixed before any pronouncement was made by the Southern delegates on that subject.

It must not be assumed, however, that the South was the only section which was agitated on account of the action of the General Conference. Annual Conferences at the North were not more temperate in their action; and they were so confident that the Plan of Separation was unconstitutional, that the border territory on the Northern side seemed to have been somewhat indifferent to the provision regarding the fixing of the line of division. The North Ohio Conference, at its session in 1845, declared the Plan to be "void" and the Southern Church a "secession," and its third resolution offered sympathy to adherents of the M. E. Church in the South in their "hour of darkness." Other Northern Conferences spoke to the same purpose, and the Illinois Conference went so far as to refuse to pay its proportion of the salary or quarterage of Bishops Soule and Andrew.<sup>17</sup> These references are made to show the state of mind in which the North approached the most serious problem of all its history.

There can be no doubt that a spirit of unfortunate resistance of the South dominated the General Conference of 1848. Those who held abolitionist sentiments could not understand that those who humiliated Bishop Andrew were not able to effect the complete

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17 *The Organization of the M. E. Church, South*, pp. 140, 146.

ecclesiastical subjugation of the South also. So effort was made to rescind the Plan of Separation and all other action that might embarrass the program of repudiation. The Conference of 1848 misjudged the contractual nature of the action which it undertook to revoke. The South was not represented and, therefore, had no part in the action by which the Conference of 1848 passed its rescinding resolution. The unfortunate state of feeling, which existed, both North and South, invited and encouraged radical action which must become a source of infinite embarrassment to those who would repair the breach thus thoughtlessly widened. The situation which developed prepared the way for the worst interpretation of the motives of the Church on both sides. Clashing factionalism developed and irrational incriminations of the opposition were all too common. Very naturally the border was the first to experience the shock of the factional strife. Charges and counter-charges of infractions of the plan, as to the border, were made. The Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church submitted a detailed list of infractions which were laid to the South, most of them having to do with Kentucky, southern Ohio, and Virginia.<sup>18</sup> It would serve no useful purpose to examine these infractions in detail; and the irritating facts connected with any particular contest would do little to illuminate the mind or compose the feelings of either side.

The invasion of the city of Cincinnati by the Southern Church appears to us now to have been of doubtful propriety. On the other hand, it was certainly not consistent to pronounce the Plan of Separation a nullity and the Southern Church a secession, and in the next breath to make complaint of the infraction of a plan so utterly outlawed. One strange fact is that the Bishops omitted the mention of Maysville, Kentucky, in

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<sup>18</sup> *Journal of the General Conference, M. E. Church, 1848*, pp. 164-171.

their list of infractions. The final adjudication of that case proved to be the undoing of the Northern Church in the property contest. Suit for the Maysville property was instituted before the assembling of the first General Conference of the Church, South, in 1846. But no question can be settled by establishing a preponderance of wrong-doing. If one were asked to state the reasons for the utter failure of all the negotiations bearing upon the relations of 1844 and after, perhaps a good answer would be the insistence of each side upon fixing a preponderance of blame.

The border issue can not be separated from the intention of the General Conference of 1844, and it is there that we must look for light on the controversy. The very first sentence of the Protest on behalf of the Southern delegates reads: "In behalf of thirteen Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and portions of the ministry and membership of several other Conferences." The first resolution of the Plan says: "With reference to the Northern boundary of such new connection;—All societies, stations, and Conferences adhering to the Church in the South, by a vote of a majority of the members of the said societies, stations, and Conferences, shall remain under the unmolested pastoral care of the Southern Church." Dr. Bond pleaded earnestly for the fixing of Conference boundaries, rather than the trouble-inviting provision of the Plan proposed; but the Conference adhered to the original draft.<sup>19</sup> The indubitable meaning of that fact is that the General Conference meant to give such flexibility to the border as would forever settle the question which had been the occasion of perpetual strife in the Church since its organization. If any parts of Virginia or Kentucky had remained under the jurisdiction of the Northern Church, the very question at issue would have

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<sup>19</sup> *Journal of the General Conference, 1844*, pp. 135.

been left unsolved. Had not the Westmoreland and Lancaster circuits presented petitions for relief from the restrictions of the Baltimore Conference in 1836? Were not the petitions renewed in 1840? Nothing could have been more unwise than to include churches and charges in an organization whose restrictions would have been politically impossible of execution. It was undoubtedly the mind of the Church that there should be established a *natural* border which would fit the political conditions and relieve both sections of the Church of the disturbances which brought about the situation of 1844.

It would not be easy to maintain a charge of infraction of the Plan by the South, as to charges located in Virginia, but which were attached to the Baltimore or Philadelphia Conferences. The Westmoreland circuit had been fighting for a decade to be emancipated from the rule of the Baltimore Conference, and the same general reason would apply to Accomac and Northampton counties on the Eastern Shore, belonging to the Philadelphia Conference. Any effort to eliminate the causes of friction which had brought on the disorganization imminent at that time must have included such cases.

It does not seem to have been the purpose of the South to go beyond what it understood to be permissible under the stipulations of the Plan. At the first General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1846, after four consecutive efforts to free itself from the impractical connection with the Baltimore Conference, Westmoreland circuit was taken over by the Southern Church. A committee, whose report was signed by William M. Wightman, examined into all charges of infraction and the report said that the charges were "entirely groundless" and that the administration "has been strictly conformed to the rule



set forth by authority of the General Conference of the M. E. Church, in its legislation on this subject, in 1844.”<sup>20</sup>

The last major difficulty to be adjusted was the division of the properties held by the Church, particularly the properties held for the whole Church. Properties held by local congregations, except those of the border, passed to the Southern Church with practically no resistance. Along the border, where feeling was sharply divided, the control of the property became a seriously contested issue, and many suits at law were instituted. In the very nature of the case, the final adjudication of those suits would depend upon the ecclesiastical legitimacy of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and that, in turn, involved the legality of the Plan of Separation, and to that phase of the problem, we now direct attention.

It would be unfair to charge the Methodist Episcopal Church with indifference to the property rights of the South. In 1848, the Methodists, North, had been brought, by a process of intemperate discussion and ill-considered Annual Conference resolution, to believe that the Plan of Separation was invalid and that the previous General Conference had exceeded its authority. It is true that large claims for the powers of that body had been made in the case of Bishop Andrew, but on the property matter there was specific restraint in the “sixth restrictive article” of the Discipline. The Annual Conference had refused to allow the modification of the rule, and to Methodist minds that seemed to settle the question, although a way around the very same obstruction had been found in the settlement of the Upper Canada Claims a few years before. It must be said to the credit of the General Conference of 1848,

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20 *Journal of General Conference, M. E. Church, South, 1846*, pp. 40, 47-54.

that, while it declared the Plan a "nullity," the question of property settlement had been left open by a rather hazy suggestion of arbitration.<sup>21</sup>

Aside from the state of feeling existing throughout the country, and particularly in the Church, there was a conviction that the "restrictive articles" of the Discipline were a much more extended bar to Conference action than they proved to be. Under the circumstances, it was easy and even natural for the North to assign such values to these constitutional reservations, and without censure or a just implication of moral obtuseness. When the general excitement and the zone of contingency are taken into consideration, the vote on the change of the "restrictive articles," in the Conferences at the North, does great credit to the mind and heart of that section of the Church. Out of twenty-two hundred and thirty-one votes cast in Northern Conferences, there was a majority of ninety-seven votes in favor of the immediate division of the property.<sup>22</sup> As a matter of fact, the vote on the very same proposition, touching the claims of Upper Canada, gave a much larger margin against the settlement.<sup>23</sup> When the latter vote was taken in 1832 and 1833, there were no complications of bitterness and prejudice, and the South was a disproportionately large contributor to the adverse vote.

The test case on the validity of the Plan of Separation was the suit involving the local Methodist Church at Maysville, Kentucky. That congregation, being a border charge, acted under the provisions of the Plan of Separation and by a small margin decided to adhere South. Seven members of the official board were included in this majority and the remaining three voted with the minority. It appears that the larger property

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21 *Journal of the General Conference, M. E. Church*, 1848, p. 95.

22 *Methodist Church Property Case*, Sutton, p. 147.

23 *Journal of the General Conference, M. E. Church*, 1836, p. 461.

holders and the more influential part of the membership voted with the minority. After the vote to adhere South, suit for the property, on behalf of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was begun immediately in the name of a Mr. Armstrong, who claimed to have been one of the larger contributors to the building. In the local court, there was no decision—the use of the building being given on alternate Sundays to each of the two contending factions. The suit was then carried up to the Court of Appeals of Kentucky where the decision gave the Plan of Separation complete validation; it was held that every right of the original Church was renounced in the part alienated; and that no part of the original remaining, by whatever name called, could reassert in the name of the whole the power and rights of the whole.<sup>24</sup> The facts in this suit have been given because of their bearing upon the major suits which were decided later.

The pivotal suits in the adjustment of property interests had to do with the connectional properties—the Book Concern in New York and Cincinnati, and the Chartered Fund in Philadelphia. A suit for the division of the Cincinnati properties was filed June 12, 1849, and it was decided adversely to the Church, South, in July, 1852, and the decision was reversed by the Supreme Court of the United States, in a decision handed down on April 25, 1854. The suit affecting the Book Concern in New York was filed July 13, 1849, argued May 19-29, 1851, and was decided in favor of the Church, South, November 11, 1851, and the matter was finally settled December 8, 1853.<sup>25</sup>

Following the decision of the Property Case, some dissentients expressed opinions which were more positive than wise or prudent. But inasmuch as the de-

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<sup>24</sup> *Methodist Church Property Case*, Sutton, p. 206-208.

<sup>25</sup> *The Disruption of the M. E. Church*, Myers, p. 151.

cision was rendered by a full bench and was unanimous, it is scarcely necessary to take notice of adverse lay opinion. There were some almost comical uncertainties recorded in some of the decisions. As we have said of the Maysville, Kentucky, decision, the use of the church building was given to each of the litigants on alternate Sundays. At Harrisonburg, Virginia, the court declined the plea of the North and gave the property to the trustees named by the South, but with the significant qualification, "with other trustees to hold the property for whomsoever it may be entitled." Judge Leavitt, who presided in the Cincinnati case, said: "Although the conclusions to which I have arrived have been satisfactory to myself, I experience the highest gratification from the reflection that, if I have misconceived the points arising in the case, and have been led to wrong results, my errors will be corrected by that high tribunal to which the rights of these parties will, without doubt, be submitted for final adjudication."<sup>26</sup> Where there was so much uncertainty in the minds of judges, we can afford to be charitable toward those who arrived at their conclusions without legal training.

The opinion of the Supreme Court may be summarized thus: The General Conference was entirely competent to effect the division, and the failure to change the restrictive article of the Discipline did not affect the validity of the Plan of Separation. Then, the Church having been divided by its own action, the property rights of the South could not be defeated by the refusal of the Annual Conferences to permit the change of the restrictive article of the Discipline. The change of the restrictive article would have permitted the Church itself to make full and immediate adjustment of the property rights; but the power of a court

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170 (Note).



of equity supersedes every ecclesiastical restriction in its right to render justice in property division.<sup>27</sup>

Dr. D. A. Whedon, in an article in the *Methodist Quarterly Review* for April, 1870, expressed the opinion that if the property question should come to a test at that time, there would be a reversal of the opinion rendered in 1854.<sup>28</sup> But four years after Dr. Whedon made this prediction, a decision was rendered in favor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in the "Jonesboro Camp Ground and Parsonage Case." The case related to Brush Creek camp ground which contained some four acres of land with a parsonage on it, in the suburbs of Johnson City, Tennessee. The property had been deeded to the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1811, but had passed to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, under the Plan of Separation. In 1865, the trustees for some reason went over to the Methodist Episcopal Church and undertook to carry the property with them. Suit was filed for its recovery and Chancellor Smith restored the property to the Southern Church, with an assessment for rentals and damages from the time the suit was filed.<sup>29</sup> The facts were somewhat different and the decision was probably influenced by the earlier litigation, but the property was returned to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and there it remains.

In addition to the ecclesiastical phase of the contest, some incidents of the War Between the States added to the trouble. In these, the name of Secretary Stanton plays an important part. The biographer of Bishop Simpson says: "As our armies penetrated the slave states, many churches were abandoned and left wholly untenanted; but in still others disloyal ministers remained as rallying-points of disloyal opinion. Secretary

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172 (Note).

<sup>29</sup> *The Christian Advocate*, New Orleans, July 9, 1874, p. 4.

Stanton, therefore, at the instance of Bishop Ames, issued an order, November 30, 1863, placing at his disposal 'all houses of worship belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in which a loyal preacher appointed by a loyal bishop does not now officiate.' Considering that it is the usual fate of churches within the fields of operations of hostile armies to be turned to account as hospitals, storehouses, and what not, and considering, too, that the use of the abandoned churches by loyal ministers might be, and was, in many ways useful to the national cause, the order was well enough. It must be borne in mind that we were in the midst of war, and that its issue was still uncertain. To encourage the expression of loyalty in the partially conquered states, and to repress disloyalty, were the obvious duties of both civilians and soldiers. But the order was extreme in its terms and worked injustice. Mr. Lincoln, who, to use his phrase, had declined 'to run the churches,' was greatly dissatisfied with this measure of his war secretary. He wrote to Mr. Stanton, February 11, 1864, saying that he was embarrassed by having had brought to him what purported to be a formal order of the War Department for the delivery of these churches to the Northern Methodist bishops, etc."<sup>30</sup>

Under the order of Secretary Stanton, Bishop Ames, the procurer of the order, took charge of the churches in the city of New Orleans, and Bishop Simpson was placed over the churches in Nashville, where Rev. M. J. Cramer, afterward American Minister to Denmark, was appointed to McKendree Church. The Church was renovated and refurnished, and was opened for service on June 12, 1864. Some of the reasoning of the foregoing quotation might be accepted, if the occupancy of the churches had ended with the restoration of peace, but

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<sup>30</sup> *Life of Bishop Matthew Simpson*, Crooks, pp. 437-439, 455.

in some cases the churches were held until long after the war was over. Of this fact, the biographer of Bishop Simpson said: "It would have been better if at the close of the war we had surrendered the churches occupied by us more promptly."<sup>31</sup> Doctor Lucius C. Matlack, of abolitionist fame and who was presiding elder in New Orleans under the regime of Bishop Ames, commenting upon the occupancy of Southern churches said: "Our ministers stood in the attitude of conquerors. They differed little, in appearance, from the relation of invaders. . . . If our occupancy of the pulpits of the Church, South, had been only for the purpose of offering the preaching of the Word to deserted congregations, and, on the return of their pastors and the restoration of peace, had been yielded up gracefully, it would have been better for the peace of the Methodist family. But such was not the case. Claims were set up to the property on questionable grounds. Possession was retained until compelled to relinquish it by civil authority."<sup>32</sup> The quotations given are not the words of the author of this book, and they are not from Southern sources. We leave them without comment.

A recent biographer of the great French statesman, Talleyrand, made a very penetrating observation in connection with his subject when he said: "It is the moment of victory that tests a statesman." It is a truth susceptible of a much wider and a more varied application than to statesmanship or even to individuals. We have already remarked upon the splendid manner in which the delegates to the Conference of 1844, in the moment of their complete triumph, rose to the delicate and responsible situation. Alas, that the Church as a whole was not able to display a poise and a Christian self-possession like unto that exhibited by

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31 *Ibid.*, p. 441.

32 Article in *Central Christian Advocate* (St. Louis), March 15, 1870.

the men who composed the leading faction in the General Conference. Two-thirds of those who had been delegates from the Northern Church to the General Conference in 1844 were not elected to the Conference of 1848. The referendum which had gone the round of the Conferences had involved much more than the modification of the "sixth restrictive article." The convictions and the ecclesiastical leadership of the North were also up for ratification by the Church, and at what appears to have been the weakest moment of its history. From the close of the General Conference of 1844 to the meeting of the Cape May Commission, the record of the Church was marked with the weaknesses of victory, and the values of a triumph which might have been the inspiration for a great constructive attitude, went to waste.

Dr. Daniel Curry, editor of the *New York Christian Advocate*, was particularly caustic and bitter toward the South, in editorial utterances of 1866 and 1867<sup>33</sup> and statements in the press of the Church, South, were not more temperate and conciliatory than were those of Dr. Curry. But editorial utterances upon the part of those so recently ejected from the pulpits of the Southern churches were unfortunate, to say the least. Bishop Soule, at the General Conference of 1844, uttered a great truth when he said: "Society, sir, whether civil or religious, has much more to fear from the passions of men—of its members—than it has to fear from calm investigation and sober inquiry."<sup>34</sup> That statement was amply justified in the period through which a divided Methodism was undergoing readjustment. The Church which thinks in terms of prejudice and resentment can hope for nothing better than to move in cycles of disastrous revolutions—the backwash of

<sup>33</sup> *Life of Bishop Matthew Simpson*, Crooks, p. 442, note); See also *Christian Advocate*, New York, Feb. 22, 1866, and April 23, 1867.

<sup>34</sup> *Journal of the General Conference, 1844*, (Debates) p. 166.



its own worst thought and feeling. The Church triumphant must bring its mind and heart into union with the purpose and plan of Him who is Head over all, in succeeding eras of divinely quickened reason.

The humiliation of Bishop Andrew and the disruption of the Church did not cure the difficulties of the Northern section, as was vainly hoped. The victorious faction of 1844 carried the fight to the people on the floor of the Annual Conferences, and the press of the Church made its contribution of bitterness. Indeed, the real alienation of the two great bodies of American Methodism did not result directly from the action of 1844, but from the unhappy events and incriminations which followed as its aftermath. Probably an instance of a great cause wrecked by well-intentioned interpreters.

As the years wore on, there was naturally a softening of the judgment on both sides, even of those who had been most pronounced and intolerant in their opinions. Dr. James Porter, of New England, whom Dr. Buckley called "an uncompromising abolitionist," said: "In looking at this long-continued controversy, we find it everywhere marked by human infirmity, to say the least of it. We are not much disposed to sit in judgment on the parties involved. None of them can take great merit to themselves. If abolitionists had been brought up in the South they would probably have acted much as Southerners did, and vice versa."<sup>35</sup>

Even Dr. Curry, to whose unfortunate editorials we have referred, came to a happier state of mind regarding the whole situation. In an editorial reprinted in the *Southern Christian Advocate*, April 21, 1875, he said: "The separation made thirty years ago was for valid and sufficient reasons; nor was the existence of slavery more than its remote cause; and the action of the General Conference of 1844, in the case of Bishop

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35 *A History of Methodism in the United States*, Buckley, Vol. II., p. 128.

Andrew was only the occasion for the denouement, which was certain, aside from that case, to come at that time, or very soon afterward. The separation was not the result of accidents, nor of incidents, nor of any extrinsic agencies. The dividing forces in the Methodism of thirty years ago, like those that disrupted the nation nearly twenty years later, were from within, and their developments with the growth of the body made the division a necessity. Two nations lay together in the womb of early American Methodism, and while there, the children struggled together within her, and their separation was a prerequisite to their peace and increase. To separate is in some cases a high and sacred duty; and to do so without a breach of charity often calls for the highest of wisdom and real goodness. No nobler exhibition of his true greatness is given in the whole history of the patriarch Abraham than in the separation between himself and his kinsman and hitherto life-long associate, when in language worthy of himself, he said without the least trace of bitterness, 'Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me.'"<sup>36</sup> Alas, that this wholesome truth might not have been learned by all parties to the struggle thirty years earlier; but such is too much to expect of our weak and combative natures.

The year 1876 marks a new era in the long disturbed relations of American Methodism. Doctors A. S. Hunt, Chas. H. Fowler, and General Clinton B. Fisk, fraternal messengers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, made great addresses before the General Conference of the Southern Church at Louisville, Kentucky; and the occasion was a long stride toward a time of better feeling. Following the addresses, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, passed the resolution which follows: "Resolved, That in order to remove all obstacles to

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<sup>36</sup> *The Disruption of the M. E. Church*, Myers, p. 104.

formal fraternity between the two Churches, our College of Bishops is authorized to appoint a Commission, consisting of three ministers and two laymen, to meet a similar Commission authorized by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and to adjust all existing difficulties." The Methodist Episcopal Church, in General Conference at Baltimore, May, 1876, adopted an identical resolution. The Commissioners for the Northern Church were: Morris D'C. Crawford, Enoch L. Fancher, Erasmus Q. Fuller, Clinton B. Fisk and John P. Newman. Those for the South were: Edward H. Myers, Robert K. Hargrove, Thomas M. Finney, David Clopton, and Robert B. Vance. The Joint Commission met at Cape May, New Jersey, Aug. 16-23, 1876. It settled a number of contested cases; cleared the way for formal fraternity between the Churches; provided regulations for the adjustment of all differences; and although there were representatives of the conservative and the extremist factions of both sides, the minutes show that not once was a negative vote recorded upon any material question.<sup>37</sup> No Southern man could utter a word against the magnanimity of the men who represented the Methodist Episcopal Church on that Commission. Their attitude was superb, unselfish and worthy of their Christian profession.

The Address sent to the ministers and members of the two Churches said:

"We adopted without dissentient voice the following

#### DECLARATION AND BASIS OF FRATERNITY

"As to the status of the Methodist Episcopal Church and of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and their co-ordinate relation as legitimate branches of Episcopal Methodism, each of said churches is a legitimate branch of Episcopal Methodism in the United

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<sup>37</sup> *Formal Fraternity, Minutes of the Cape May Commission (Reprint)*, pp. 59-84.

States, having a common origin in the Methodist Episcopal Church organized in 1784; and, since the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was consummated in 1845 by the voluntary exercise of the right of the Southern Annual Conferences, ministers, and members, to adhere to that communion, it has been an evangelical church reared on Scriptural foundations, and her ministers and members, with those of the Methodist Episcopal Church, have constituted one Methodist family, though in distinct ecclesiastical connections."

The Commission then addressed itself to the adjustment of property controversies. Before them were cases from Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Tennessee, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Two principles of settlement were adopted: 1. As to the legal ownership of properties in controversy. 2. As to the wisdom and desirability of dispossessing a society, using a church to which title had been lost by transfer from one Church to another. Under these principles, four rules were laid down:

I. In cases not adjudicated by the Commission itself, the society in possession to retain title, unless those claiming title should constitute a larger group than the occupying society.

II. 1. In cases decided by the courts, or by agreements already made, such decisions or agreements were to be carried out. 2. Adverse claimants to make amicable adjustment, irrespective of title, and to submit to three arbitrators in case of disagreement. 3. Where only one society exists, property to vest in it under Rule I.

III. Where necessary to fulfill conditions of Rules I and II, the title to property to be transferred.

IV. These rules of settlement to become operative immediately.



The Address recommended that weak societies unite with strong societies, and that the ministers recognize each other as possessed with equal right, dignity, and validity. The Commission then admonished the churches in the words of Bishop McKendree and the Wesleyan Missionary Committee, addressed to missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Wesleyan Connection in the Canadas in 1820:

“Feel that you are one with your brethren, embarked in the same great cause and eminently of the same religious family, and if any warm spirits rise up and trouble you, remember that you are to act on the principles now sanctioned and avowed by the two connections, and not upon local prejudices.”<sup>38</sup>

More than ten years before, the War Between the States had ended; and now the way was clear for a better understanding and for Christian fraternity between the two great branches of Episcopal Methodism; but we dare to say that the hill was longer than any at that time imagined it would be.

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.



## CHAPTER X

### THE IRREPRESSIBLE CONFLICT

THE years between the division of the Church in 1844 and the beginning of the Civil War were for the most part occupied with the controversies which grew out of the separation. We have discussed the main features of the struggle already, but there are certain facts and incidents which have not been presented and we return for a fuller and a more connected presentation of the history of the Church following the division. We have intentionally left out much of the bitterness and the invective which characterized the discussions of that unhappy era, but enough has been said to justify the observation of a recent writer who said that this period might "well be termed the tragic era in the history of American Methodism." It was an era dominated by one issue and all other incidents and events were overshadowed by it. The history of Methodism in the United States for that period was fixed and determined by that irresistible factor. Calamitous as were the effects of the struggle on the fortune and progress of the Church, no discriminating student can afford to treat the events of the period as incidental or secondary, and belief in the province of God in human affairs compels us to give them the place which they came to have in church history. Therefore let us, with a shudder of fateful recollections and a devout prayer of faith and hope, trust that such an issue may never again arise to impede the progress of the kingdom of God or to bring

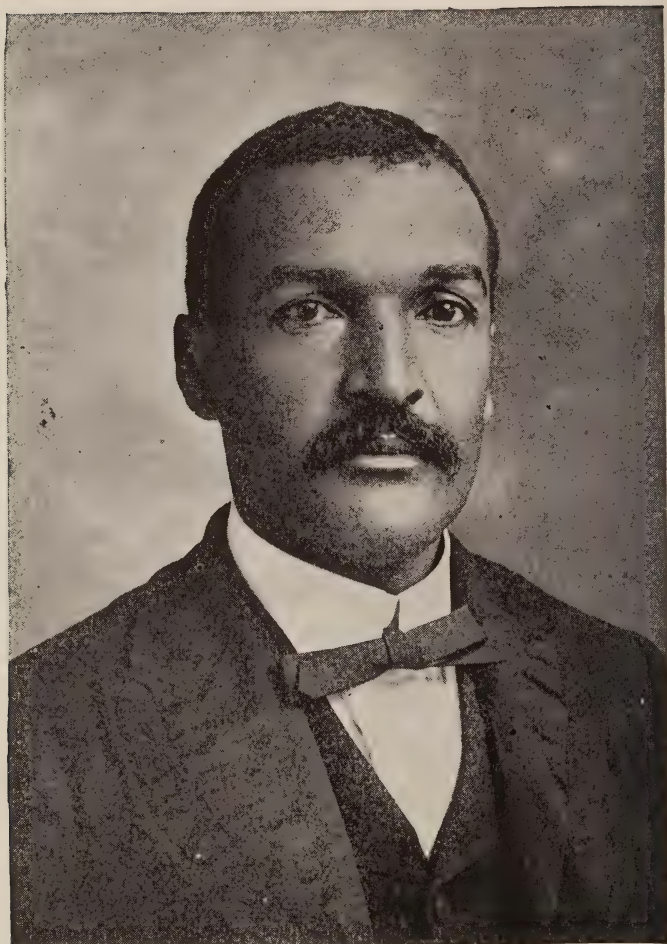
upon our land a scourge of fratricidal strife. We should think of the unhappy incidents of the first quarter of a century of our disunion as things to be remembered, that such things might not be repeated in either our history or our attitudes.

The Louisville Convention of 1845 did little more than decide the issue of division according to the Plan of Separation adopted the year before by the General Conference at its session in New York; and the twelve months following the Convention were occupied with the proceedings of ratification by the Annual Conferences of the step taken at Louisville. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, had distinct ecclesiastical being but no body or church law until the General Conference which met at Petersburg, Virginia, May 1, 1846, set up the machinery which completed the action of the Convention and established the processes through which the Church might function. In the two years between the General Conference of 1844 and the first General Conference of the Southern Church in 1846, the slaveholding Conferences occupied a rather anomalous position. Up to the Convention they were legally under the authority of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, but by the action of the Convention, their relation with that body was dissolved, and there followed a hiatus in administration which was met through Methodist loyalty rather than by church law. The Louisville Convention invited Bishops Soule and Andrew to unite with and become constitutional Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Bishop Andrew, whom the Bishops had left without assignment under the Finley Resolution of 1844, signified his acceptance at once; but Bishop Soule felt himself under obligation to carry out the plan of work in the Conferences to which he was assigned, until such time as those





JOHN WESLEY GILBERT



Representative of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church who accompanied Bishop Walter R. Lambuth to the Belgian Congo, the heart of Africa, in 1911.

Conferences might be organized into a new General Conference and he should be free to adhere to the Church, South.

The first General Conference of the Southern Church was cautious and conservative in its action. It was scrupulously careful to maintain the form and the integrity of Methodist administration, and it practically adopted the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, with only such changes as were made necessary by the action of the Louisville Convention. The Conference met on May 1, and was called to order by Dr. William Winans, of Mississippi. Dr. John Early, of Virginia, was chosen president *pro tem*—Bishop Andrew not having arrived, and Bishop Soule not yet having adhered to the Church, South. On the second day, Bishop Andrew was present and took the chair, and Bishop Soule formally cast in his lot with the South. With this completion of the organization, the General Conference settled down to grapple with its problems.

The General Conference met its responsibility in a manner worthy of the men who composed it and of the Church which they represented. There was no retreat from any vital interest of Methodism. The Committee on Missions presented a report urging the establishment of a mission to China, and a resolution was adopted recommending that the Board of Missions institute a mission to Africa, "as soon as any providential opening shall appear." Such an opening did not appear, however, until 1914, when a mission was opened in the Belgian Congo. The Constitution of the Missionary Society of the Church was adopted, and the new unit of Methodism gave itself in earnest to missionary conquest. In educational matters, there was equally marked interest also. Morrison College, the academic department of Transylvania University, at Lexington, Kentucky, was offered to the Church, South, and was

accepted. In the Pastoral Address, the Bishops said that there were "various seminaries and schools under our care and patronage—some forty in number." There were also: La Grange College, in Alabama; Randolph-Macon College, in Virginia; Emory College, of Georgia; Emory and Henry, of Western Virginia; Centenary College of Louisiana; St. Charles, of Missouri; Wesleyan and Rutgersville Colleges, of Texas; and the Literary Department of Transylvania University, the oldest academic foundation in the great Ohio and Mississippi basin. At the second General Conference, it was found that the administration of Morrison College by the General Conference had not been satisfactory and it was turned over to the Kentucky and the Louisville Conferences to be administered as an Annual Conference interest.

The Episcopacy, composed of Bishops Andrew and Soule, was strengthened by the election and consecration of Dr. William Capers and Dr. Robert Paine. The adherence of Westmoreland circuit of the Baltimore Conference was accepted and it was made a part of the Virginia Conference. A commission was raised to publish a revised edition of the Hymn Book, and Richmond, Charleston, and Louisville were designated as book depositories. Dr. Lovick Pierce of Georgia was chosen fraternal messenger to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Pittsburg in 1848. An interesting side light upon the temper of the time is furnished by a resolution which failed to pass. It was a resolution to discourage the continuance of controversy by the church press, and that Southern Editors, "Be requested to allude to the subject as seldom as possible, and strictly to avoid all personalities, and to promote as much as possible, peace between the two connections."<sup>1</sup> That Resolution was signed by B. M.

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<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the General Conference, M. E. Church, South, 1846, p. 96.*



Drake and Fountain E. Pitts. The General Conference adjourned on May 23, 1846.

The year following the first General Conference of the Southern Church, a Chinese Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Foo Chow was established by J. D. Collins, Moses C. White, and Robert S. Maclay, The Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, set itself to execute the order of the General Conference with reference to China, and Bishop Capers was charged with the responsibility of finding suitable persons for the enterprise. An appeal for volunteers was published in the Southern Christian Advocate, and Charles W. Taylor and Benjamin Jenkins were chosen. Taylor had been a school teacher in South Carolina, he was the son of a Presbyterian minister, and he was converted and joined the Methodist Church at Bedford Street Church, New York. Jenkins was the foreman of the press room of the Southern Christian Advocate, and he is said to have taken a medical degree in Philadelphia as a preparation for his work. Taylor and Jenkins, with their wives, sailed for Hong Kong in 1848. Taylor went immediately to Shanghai which had been chosen as the center of missionary operations, but Jenkins tarried in Hong Kong on account of the illness of his wife, and he joined the mission in Shanghai later. In the years which followed, W. G. E. Cunyngham, D. C. Kelly, J. W. Lambuth, J. W. Belton, Young J. Allen, and M. L. Wood were sent as re-enforcements; but when the war came on the trying climate of China had brought to an end, either through sickness or death, the missionary careers of all but J. W. Lambuth, Young J. Allen, and M. L. Wood and their families. Mrs. Wood died, and J. W. Lambuth came home in 1861, and the other two remained on the field alone and without support from home.

Another missionary interest which enlisted the at-

tention and interest of the Church during the first quadrennium, was California. The western country came into sudden importance due to the discovery of gold, and the gold rush of the "forty-niners" drew the attention of the Church to the missionary need and opportunity of that field. In February, 1850, Jesse Boring and two assistants went out from Georgia, Mr. D. W. Pollock, of St. Louis, went out also, and in 1852 A. M. Wynn of Georgia was added to the force. The missionaries on the field found great hospitality and there was a rapid growth of the Church, and the Pacific Conference was organized in 1852.

The Second General Conference of the Church, South, met in Centenary Church, St. Louis, May 1, 1850. It remained in session only two weeks on account of a scourge of cholera which was prevalent in the city. Rev. Issac Boring, a delegate from Georgia, died of the plague, and from that time to the adjournment, a shadow rested upon the Conference. Very little new or important legislation was undertaken at this session. Those who were charged with looking after the property claims reported that suits had been instituted for equities in the properties of New York, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati. Dr. Lovick Pierce reported the failure of his fraternal mission to the Methodist Episcopal Church, and his final and personal message to the General Conference of that Church was made a part of the records of the Southern Church. Dr. W. A. Smith and Dr. Thomas Crowder, both of Virginia, championed a rather novel change in the constitution of the General Conference. It was proposed to introduce an "Upper House" to be chosen by laymen and whose functions were to be wholly judicial. It was a clumsy and cumbersome form of the Judicial Council recently adopted by the Church, South. Dr. Henry B. Bascom was elected Bishop, but on September 8, follow-

ing his ordination, he died, having held only the St. Louis Conference.

The era of peace, for which both sides vainly hoped when the Church was divided, did not become a permanent reality, and the slavery issue was soon to the fore again. At the General Conference of 1850, an effort was made to expunge the rule on slavery, but it failed of success. After the defeat of the move, J. Hamilton introduced and secured the passage of a Resolution of explanation which compromised and defeated what had been done.<sup>2</sup> The issue was pressed, particularly by South Carolina whose delegation voted solidly for the motion. Their dissatisfaction was very pronounced and probably remembering that on the motion of Asbury in 1808 a special Discipline had been authorized for use in the South Carolina Conference, with the rule on slavery deleted from it, the same Conference now, without authorization of the General Conference, ordered the publication of an edition of the Discipline with the rule on slavery left out. Editorial notice was given in the *Southern Christian Advocate*, May 16, 1851, of the issuance of the Discipline ordered by the South Carolina Conference. The editorial described it as: "*A fac simile* of that bearing the imprimatur of John Early, identical in all respects with the connectional edition, with the exception of the necessary alteration of the title-page, and the omission of the second part—that on slavery." The reason given for this act of insubordination was that it had been the, "Fruitful source of trouble to the Methodist Church, a doctrine to which none in South Carolina ever subscribed, and has long since become inoperative and ceased by common consent to set forth a practical rule or principle."<sup>3</sup> The last clause was the

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1850, pp. 213, 214.

<sup>3</sup> *The Christian Advocate*, New Orleans, May 24, 1851.

exact language of the Resolution of explanation which the General Conference had ordered inserted in the Discipline of 1850. This incident was followed in 1854 by action to remove the rule from the Discipline, but the change was not properly acted upon in the Pacific and the Kansas Mission Conferences and it was re-submitted in 1858 by a vote of 140 to 8. Before the assembling of another General Conference of the Southern Church, the war had made unnecessary a report from the Annual Conferences.

The same question agitated the Methodist Episcopal Church in its session of 1856 at Indianapolis. Motion was made to change the rule on slavery. At that time, Rev. John A. Collins, who had been the counsel for the Baltimore Conference against Francis A. Harding in 1844, said that in 1848, "The Plan of Separation was repudiated to enable us to go to our brethren in the border work, and they received us expressly on the ground of the Discipline as it is, and because they were opposed to the policy of the M. E. Church, South, on the subject of slavery. And it does not seem to us expedient, or indeed just, now to enforce upon them other measures which, in their judgment, will seriously cripple, if not extinguish the work among them."<sup>4</sup> In 1860, the General Conference meeting in Buffalo, New York, adopted a new chapter on the subject of slavery which made slaveholding a term of communion. *The Methodist*, which began publication soon after the adjournment of the General Conference, had Rev. Geo. R. Crooks, D.D., and Rev. John McClintock for editor and assistant, respectively. It was an independent paper which had for its purpose the defense of the new legislation on slavery. On September 14, 1860, the preachers of the Baltimore Conference met in Wesley Chapel to consider the new legislation, and that meet-

<sup>4</sup> From the *Daily Western Christian Advocate*, quoted in *Christian Advocate*, New Orleans, June 7, 1856.



ing was followed on December 5, 6, by a meeting of laymen of the Baltimore Conference. The meeting included representatives from a majority of the circuits and stations of the Conference, and four resolutions were adopted, the first of which said: "Resolved, That the Baltimore Annual Conference should at its next session declare that, by its recent unconstitutional and violent action, the Buffalo General Conference has sundered the ecclesiastical connection which has hitherto held us together as one Church, and that the Baltimore Conference does not and cannot longer remain under its jurisdiction or submit to its authority, or those representing that authority."<sup>5</sup> The resolution was adopted by a vote of 91 to 32, and the intensity of feeling on this subject was further evidenced by the fact that when the war ended, a considerable part of the Baltimore Conference, having maintained an independent status during the progress of the war, went in a body to the Southern Church, an incident which will receive fuller consideration later.

But the ferment and agitation on account of slavery was not confined to Episcopal Methodism. In a convention of the Methodist Protestant Church, held at Springfield, Ohio, in November, 1858, the Northern and Western Conferences withdrew on account of the slavery issue, and they sought union with the Wesleyan Connection which had been organized by Orange Scott and others in 1843, a Church which embodied the doctrinal and administrative features of the Methodist Protestant Church.<sup>6</sup> From 1844 forward slavery was a national issue which neither church nor state could avoid.

Another question which had been in abeyance since the formation of the Methodist Protestant Church, in 1830, became a subject of renewed interest at this

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<sup>5</sup> *The Christian Advocate*, New Orleans, December 19, 1860.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, December 29, 1858.

time. It was the demand for the introduction of lay representation into the administration of the Church. Echoes continued to be heard from time to time, and the demand grew in its insistence, but there was no adoption of lay representation by either branch of Episcopal Methodism until after the war. It was consistently put forward in the General Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, from 1850 until it was finally incorporated in its Discipline. The financial plan adopted in 1850, provided for the optional use of a form of lay co-operation "on all questions relating to the financial and secular interests of the Church,"<sup>7</sup> and the same plan was given even a stronger emphasis in 1858. This limited participation of the laymen in the administration of the Church soon revealed the value of lay counsel, and it gave to the laymen themselves a deeper and a more personal interest in the affairs of the Church.

On March 3, 1852, following the introduction of lay co-operation into the councils of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, a convention was held in Philadelphia to consider the propriety of petitioning the General Conference, soon to convene in Boston, on the subject of the introduction of lay representation. The convention assembled in Nazareth M. E. Church, and it was presided over by William H. Allen, President of Girard College. Only 30 of the 170 delegates appointed were in actual attendance. The convention petitioned for the amendment of the constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church so as to permit the introduction of lay representation into the General and Annual Conferences, in a manner not to conflict with the rights of the clergy in their appropriate ministerial and pastoral duties. The convention cited the progress of the Southern Church under the action of 1850, and it broke into

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<sup>7</sup> *Journal of the General Conference, M. E. Church, South, 1850, p. 215,*

cheers when the statement was made that division of the Church would not have occurred, had there been lay representation in 1844.<sup>8</sup> This sanguine prophecy was not borne out, as we have seen, by the action of the Methodist Protestant Church, in which there was lay representation from its organization. *The Advocate and Journal*, New York, declined to publish the proceedings, some other papers called the convention a body of "Mutual Rights Agitators," but Zion's Herald was more liberal toward the movement. In 1858, the Oregon Annual Conference assumed a more modest attitude and requested the General Conference to provide for lay representation in financial, educational, and benevolent matters—the lay co-operation which had been adopted by the Southern Church.<sup>9</sup>

Such were the preliminary steps of the preparation for lay representation North and South. In 1866, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, passed a measure, sponsored by Dr. Holland N. McTyeire, for the introduction of lay representation, and it was subsequently ratified by the constitutional majority in the Annual Conferences. In 1868, the Methodist Episcopal Church took similar action, which was also approved by the Annual Conferences. Thus ended a long era of the divine right of ministerial control in the councils of American Episcopal Methodism. The periodical literature of the day shows a timidity of Methodist leadership touching the great reforms which were being sought. While the General Conference was seeking to lay a solid theological and ethical foundation for its course, it was at the same time carefully exploring the minds and emotions of the people.

Three new Conference organs appeared in 1851, and another in 1854. They were the New Orleans, the Nashville and Louisville, the St. Louis and the Texas

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<sup>8</sup> *The Christian Advocate*, New Orleans, January 24, and March 20, 1852.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, October 20, 1858.

Christian Advocates. In addition to these, the North Carolina Christian Advocate was established in 1856. During this quadrennium, Methodism sustained a great loss in the death of two eminent leaders. Stephen Olin, who died on August 16, 1851, was tender and sympathetic and widely beloved in all sections of the Church. Bishop Elijah Hedding, who died on April 9, 1852, was a man of heroic mould and was truly an ecclesiastical statesman. The virtues of the two men were of different order, but each made a great contribution to the Church in the most difficult period of its history.

Other items of interest in the quadrennium which ended with the General Conference of 1854, are few, but some of them were of real significance to Methodist history. Such was the resignation of Bishop Hamline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1852. His health failed and, true to his own low church theory of the Episcopacy, he insisted upon being permitted to resign. Some in the General Conference were disposed to resist his resignation, but the inimitable Peter Cartwright insisted upon accepting the resignation, saying: "It was Hamline's doctrine and their doctrine, and that he had been looking for a case to set themselves right before the world." The resignation of Bishop Hamline was accepted and he retired to Mount Pleasant, Iowa, where, after an illness extending over many years, he died on February 22, 1865. He will long be remembered as a leading figure in the proceedings which terminated in the division of the Church.

At this period, both North and South, the question of "pewed churches" and "family sitting" became an issue. From the beginning of the societies in America, it had been a regulation of the Discipline in both Churches that "the men and women sit apart." Very naturally there were those who were disposed to read into that regulation the will and revelation of God, and



who would resist in all sincerity all innovations or encroachments upon the time-honored rule. It is difficult for us to understand the feeling which this proposed change developed. In a letter to Rev. J. Lane and Rev. Levi Pearce of Vicksburg, Mississippi, in 1849, Bishop Soule said that the rule had been "enacted and perpetuated by the proper authorities of the Church," and that it was not "advisory." He held, therefore, that a departure from that regulation of our places of worship was an innovation on the established order of the church, and "not the exercise of an authorized discretion." Bishop Soule expressed his regret on account of the invasion of the "primitive simplicity," which he strongly intimated would be followed by the decay of the spiritual life of Methodism.<sup>10</sup>

In the Church, North, the controversy over "pewed churches" became acute, particularly in the Ohio Conference where Rev. John S. Inskip introduced "family sittings" in the churches at Dayton and Springfield. The Ohio Conference, in order to curb the innovation, undertook to supplement the Discipline by adding some rather threatening resolutions of its own. But Rev. Mr. Inskip was not deterred by the warning. He continued the practice of "family sittings" and he wrote a book, *Methodism Explained and Defended*, in which he took the position that the rule was "advisory" and, therefore, subject to such interpretation and application as "private judgment" might dictate. On complaint of Rev. G. Moody, Inskip was brought to trial before the Ohio Annual Conference on charges of violating his pledge to the Conference, and contumacious treatment of the Conference by the publication of obnoxious matter contained in the book which he had published.<sup>11</sup> He was convicted by the Conference,

<sup>10</sup> See Charles Betts Galloway, Duren, pp. 324-326.

<sup>11</sup> Life of Rev. John S. Inskip, McDonald and Searles, pp. 98-111. See also *Methodism Explained and Defended*, Inskip, pp. 67-90.

but on appeal to the General Conference of 1852, the case was reversed by a vote of 87 to 64. Whereupon, the General Conference gave official interpretation of the Disciplinary rule, saying that it was "advisory" and not mandatory.

In 1853 and more or less from year to year, the coast cities of the country were visited by disastrous scourges of yellow fever. This was particularly true of the South. In some years the desolating plague extended from New York to Galveston. In New Orleans, at the peak of the epidemic, deaths reached 400 per day and there were approximately 5,000 deaths in a single epidemic. But despite controversy and scourges of fever, Episcopal Methodism, North and South, registered a substantial growth in membership throughout the years from 1850 to 1854. The statistics of British Methodism for 1852, however, revealed serious losses. There was a good gain on the mission fields, but Methodism in Britain showed a loss of 20,946 members, and the net loss for the connection totaled 18,494. All in all, it was a period of growth and substantial achievement for world Methodism.

The General Conference of 1854 met in Columbus, Georgia, on May 1, and its session was taken up largely with questions relating to the location and the relocation of the connectional enterprises that were to serve the Church. The report of the Secretary of Missions, Dr. E. W. Sehon, showed an encouraging progress. The collections for missions advanced from sixty-eight thousand dollars in 1846 to one hundred and eighty-six thousand dollars in 1853. This may be taken to indicate in general the growth and progress of the Church.

One of the principal issues which came before the Conference was the establishment and location of a Publishing House. On the third day of the session, a

resolution for the establishment of a Book Concern was introduced by Rev. T. N. Ralston of Kentucky. The proposition was debated for exactly one week and the Resolution was adopted on May 10. Then the contest turned to the question of location. Nashville, Louisville, Memphis, St. Louis, Prattville, Ala., Atlanta and Columbus, Georgia, were put forward for the honor. After all had been eliminated except Nashville and Louisville, the final vote stood Nashville 60, Louisville 57. From that day to the present time, Nashville has been the publishing center of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Another question which came up was the proposition to relocate the domicile of the Board of Missions. Originally it had been located in Louisville, and a motion was made to move it to Nashville. This move was opposed by the nomination of New Orleans. Nashville was chosen by a vote of 59 to 43.

At this Conference, Methodist education received most careful consideration. Dr. David S. Doggett, on behalf of the Committee on Education, reported to the General Conference the names and locations of 81 schools of all grades. Twenty-five of them were called colleges, sixteen of which were for the education of women exclusively. Fifty-six were high schools, institutes, seminaries and academies. The school enrollment was listed as 8,000 pupils, including 1,000 in the colleges. The total endowment of the educational enterprises of the Southern Church was given as \$182,000, and of that amount Randolph-Macon and Wofford Colleges had each \$60,000, La Grange College, Tennessee, had \$25,000, Cokesbury College, South Carolina, had \$15,000, Emory College, Georgia, had \$12,000, Centenary College in Louisiana had \$10,000. Nineteen of the colleges appear to have had no endowment whatever. But notwithstanding the poverty of the institutions

for higher education, at least eleven of them have survived to the present time, either directly or through mergers with other institutions. Not less important than the listing of the colleges and their assets, was a Resolution offered by Dr. LeRoy M. Lee, of Virginia, which sought better preparation for the candidates for the Methodist ministry. With the adoption of the Resolution, the General Conference placed the ministry of the Methodists on the highroad to a more wholesome and helpful service and a more effective leadership for the Methodist hosts. George F. Pierce of Georgia, John Early of Virginia, and H. H. Kavanaugh of Kentucky were elected to the episcopacy.

The years immediately following 1854 were anything but propitious for the promotion of the moral and religious progress of the people, and ominous shadows of war were gathering in the path of the nation. The period was filled with incidents of minor and routine nature, and there was no event of outstanding importance to Methodist history. The collections for missions were steadily increasing; but despite the advancing collections for missions, those who were charged with the administration of that interest were not able to keep the budget balanced. Dr. Sehon, the Secretary of the Board, was a thoroughly good man, but a poor financier. The report for 1856 showed a deficit of \$40,000, and when the war was over the total indebtedness of the Board was double that amount—a more alarming condition then than it might be considered to be today.

The educational report which was made to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, at Indianapolis in 1856, showed 19 universities and colleges, with 100 professors and 2,000 students; and 98 seminaries, with 300 teachers and 14,500 pupils. College property was reported at \$500,000, and endowment at



\$1,500,000. Two theological seminaries were reported as belonging to the Church—Concord and Evanston. The membership of the Church had increased more than 70,000 during the previous quadrennium, and while there had been a recession in the volume of contributions for missions it was not due to a diminution of interest or missionary zeal on the part of the Church. Bishop Beverly Waugh, senior Bishop of the Church, died at Baltimore, February 9, 1858.

The General Conference of 1858 met in the Hall of the House of Representatives in Nashville, on May 1. It was not an aggressive Conference—it appears to have been rather reactionary. It was occupied largely with questions of Conference division and expansion, with a proposed mission to the west coast of Africa, missions to the slaves, a mission to Central America, and the establishment of the Rio Grande Conference. The city of Portsmouth, Virginia, petitioned the Conference for the “obliteration” of the presiding eldership, or its “discontinuance in the older Conferences,” and an effort was made to remove the “New Orleans exception” to the time limit of the pastorate, but both failed of adoption. Dr. Holland N. McTyeire, who had been the editor of the New Orleans *Christian Advocate* since 1851, was elected editor of the General Organ at Nashville.

A lively contest arose over the organization and management of the affairs of the Publishing House which had been established at the preceding General Conference. The colporteur method of book distribution had not proved either profitable or satisfactory; and the drafts of the Advocates for their deficiencies greatly embarrassed the business. The obligations of the House appear to have been approximately fifty thousand dollars in excess of the liquid assets, and that

fact greatly disturbed the minds of the delegates. The Conference severed the connection with various *Advocates* and turned them over to become Conference enterprises, both as respects their service and their support. It also launched upon a scheme of depositories for the sale of the books and the literature of the Church, and these depositories were to be promoted and supervised by a financial agent who would travel from Conference to Conference in that interest.

A controversy arose over the question of the method for raising the money for the support of the Bishops. Various methods were proposed and voted down. As a final solution of the problem, it was voted to place seventy per cent of the levy on the Conferences and the remaining thirty per cent on the Board of Missions. The total amount apportioned to the Conferences was \$6,775, of which \$700, the largest apportionment, was placed upon the Alabama Conference, and Louisiana was apportioned only \$250 of that amount. This means that the sum of \$9,678.57 annually was levied for the travel and keep of the six active bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

A matter of painful interest at this Conference, was the complaints which were lodged against the official administration of Bishop John Early by seven annual Conferences of the connection. He was charged with being abrupt, discourteous, impatient and sometimes seemingly overbearing. His age and long service to the Church were factors in his favor, but he was finally required to give assurance of amendment before his character was passed.<sup>12</sup> It developed afterward that his faults were not so easily cured as was hoped. In 1860 he raised a furor in the North Carolina Conference, the staunchest friends of the man and his administration, over the appointment of a presiding elder pro tem

<sup>12</sup> *Journal of General Conference*, M. E. Church, South, 1858, pp. 406, 462 465, 466, 472.

for Dr. C. F. Deems who went abroad for a short while. By a vote of 65 to 59, New Orleans was selected for the General Conference of 1862—a Conference destined never to convene, for Farragut's fleet having run the gauntlet of the Confederate batteries, New Orleans was in the hands of the enemy.

The Church, South, began the new quadrennium with more than five hundred thousand white members and probationers, including the ministers, and with two hundred thousand colored members and probationers. According to the report of the Missionary Society of the Alabama Conference for 1859, 33 of the 51 missions maintained were for colored people,<sup>13</sup> and the same interest in missions to the slaves prevailed throughout the great slaveholding section of the South. These facts show the aggressiveness of the Methodism of the South, and they reveal its fidelity to the task which was peculiarly its own. The iniquities of slavery, as an institution, did not destroy the conscience of the Southern Methodist Church, neither did the bitter controversies between the sections cause a reaction against the spiritual development of the Negro race.

During the first two years following the General Conference of 1858, there was a gain of approximately forty thousand in the membership of the Church, and the missionary and benevolent interests were well supported. But the continued anti-slavery agitation produced a feeling of economic and social insecurity, and there was an atmosphere of political uncertainty throughout the nation which militated against every form of religious activity. The year 1860, witnessed the most heated political campaign in the history of American presidential elections. Slavery and abolition were discussed until the whole country was in a commotion; and when Abraham Lincoln was elected to the

<sup>13</sup> *Christian Advocate*, New Orleans, December 28, 1859.

Presidency over Stephen A. Douglass, John C. Breckenridge and John Bell, it created an excitement at the South unparalleled in its history. The Southern people felt certain that slavery was doomed and with its destruction would go the doctrine of "states rights." This situation resulted in the holding of mass meetings all over the South, an attitude and spirit of resistance, and the long and bloody struggle from 1861 to 1865.

The fall of Fort Donaldson early in 1862, opened a gateway for the invasion of the central South, the dismemberment of the territory of Southern Methodism, and the introduction of chaos and confusion into the program and work of the Church. The exhaustion of the resources of the South in the maintenance of the defending armies strained every support of its economic life, and the ruthless burning and sacking by Sherman's invading army produced a condition of economic collapse in which every institution, civic, social and religious, shared. The Annual Conferences met under great difficulty and in many instances the Bishops were not able to get to the seat of the Conferences and a presiding officer had to be chosen from the body. In that way the organization was kept intact, but progress was altogether out of the question. In addition to all these things, there must be added the disrupting influence of war upon the social and religious life of the people. The preachers found plenty to keep them busy in the homes where war had brought sorrow and suffering, and many of them gave themselves to ministering to the army in the field. They preached and taught the soldiers in the camps and they ministered to those who filled the crude and hastily arranged field hospitals.

In all probability, the least disturbed section of the Church was around Richmond, Virginia. It was the capital of the Confederacy and was the objective of the



enemy armies, and was, therefore, the center of the main theater of war; but every resource of the South was used for its defence, for the capital must be maintained. It suffered the distractions incident to war, but there were no distractions incident to capitulations and capture until the end of the war was in sight. The records show that large areas of the Church lost heavily in membership during the struggle, while the city of Richmond maintained a reduced but steady increase. For the decade in which the war occurred, Methodism in the city of Richmond gained 29.93 per cent,<sup>14</sup> against less than one-half of one per cent for the entire Church. Such was the catastrophe which befell American Methodism in the middle of the years, and such the tragic story of the expunging of the practice and political sanction of American slavery. The nation, North and South, lost the flower of its young manhood—the hope and sinew of its tomorrow, always the pawn of war. More lamentable still, was the loss of that spirit of unity and fraternity in which the nation was born. Estranged brothers of a common blood, the ecclesiastical descendants of the Wesleys, purchased possessions of the Son of God, after three-quarters of a century of formal peace, we nurse our scars, we cherish our reservations, and we refuse to put away the badges of our disunion.

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14 *A Hundred Years of Richmond Methodism*, Pell, p. 52.



## CHAPTER XI

### AFTER APPOMATTOX

FOLLOWING the surrender of the Southern armies in April, 1865, there was a period of confusion and depression due to the return of the worn and beaten troops who had been paroled, a more disheartening effort to reorganize the social and industrial life of the ruined South, and with it all a program of political reconstruction as short-sighted and selfish as it was vindictive and ruthless. The enfranchisement of the Negro and the misguided zeal of the victors who sought to humiliate the South by placing the slave over his former master, and the publicity given to the political addresses, called prayers, of Senator Hiram Revels of Mississippi, who was styled "Bishop of the Senate," created racial antagonisms in the South which the Negro has not even yet been able to live down, and the forces of righteousness among the white people have not been sufficient to conquer, nor always to hold in check. In the city of New Orleans, the *Picayune* of August 28, 1867, reported that under the regime of Sheridan, eight of the new Board of Education in the city were colored. Throughout the South, the Negro, for no fault of his, was thrust into places for which he had no qualification whatever and which, in the very nature of the case, he would be forced to relinquish. It is not necessary to go further into the harrowing chapter of a political tyranny which no church could hope to cope with or control.

There was a phase, however, for which the Church was more directly responsible. We refer to the continued occupation of the churches and pulpits of the South under a military order of the Secretary of War. An interesting side light upon the feeling which developed in New Orleans, is furnished by the fact that Dr. John C. Keener, afterward Bishop, as president of the Louisiana Legal Conference, was compelled to sign a *release*, by which both the Government and the Methodist Episcopal Church were to be held harmless as to rentals and the abuse of the properties taken over by Bishop Ames under the order of Secretary Stanton. The correspondence was signed by Wickham Hoffman, by order of General E. R. S. Canby, of the Federal army, and by John C. Keener on behalf of the Louisiana Conference; two of the four documents were dated November 15 and 18, and two November 20, 1865; and they name specifically the Government and the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>1</sup> As will be seen, this correspondence occurred less than five months before the assembling of the General Conference of the disorganized, but unconquered forces of Southern Methodism. These are not pleasant facts to recall, but they are matters of history and that is a sufficient apology for their introduction here.

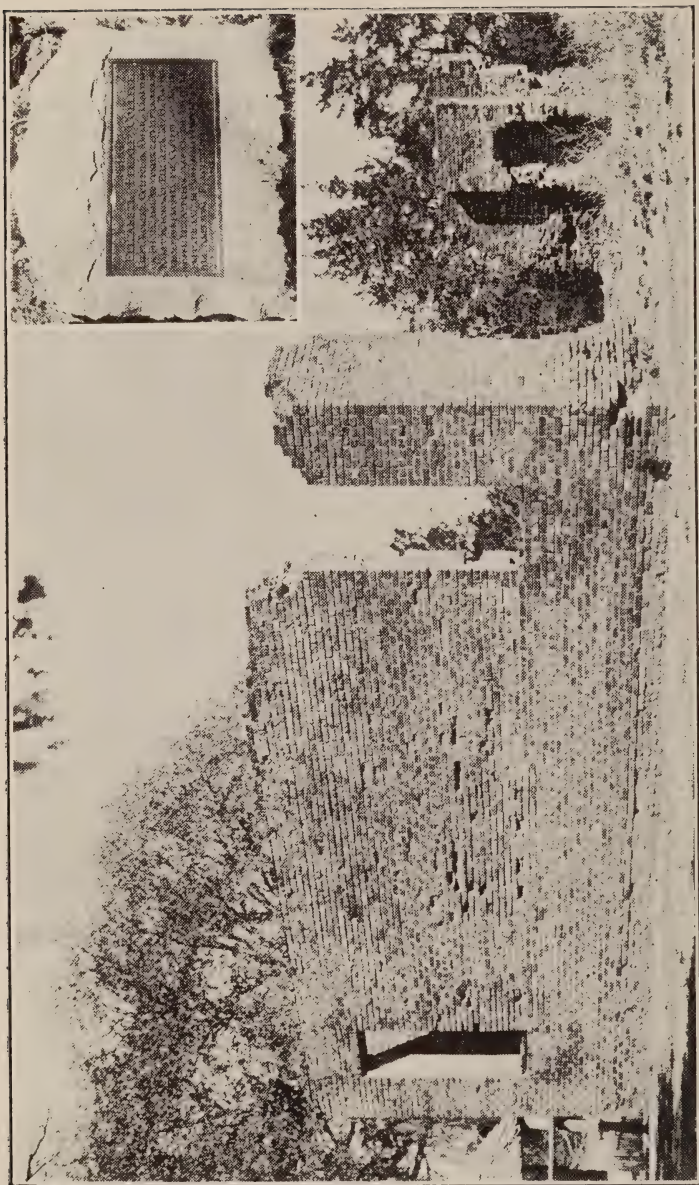
In the summer of 1865, several months after the disbanding of the Confederate armies, the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, met at Columbus, Georgia, issued an address to the Church, and summoned the General Conference to meet at New Orleans in April, 1866. During the progress of the war, the white membership of the Southern Church suffered a loss of 113,000, and as a result of the war, the colored membership was rapidly disintegrating. The contributions for missions increased sixty per cent from 1860

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<sup>1</sup> *The Christian Advocate*, New Orleans, February 3, 1866.







RUINS OF ELIZABETH ACADEMY, NEAR WASHINGTON, MISSISSIPPI

to 1864, but the money of the South was valueless, and an impoverished Church was left to wrestle with a stupendous missionary debt. The same story was true of the Publishing House which had been wrecked by army use and abuse. On March 8, 1871, Dr. A. H. Redford, the Publishing Agent, reported to the Baltimore Conference at Salem, Virginia, that at the close of the war, he had gone to New York and Philadelphia and had found the creditors of the House willing to settle for twenty-five cents on the dollar, but that the Publishing House had refused to compromise and had paid its obligations in full.<sup>2</sup> These things may be taken as fair examples of the condition which prevailed throughout the Church, South; and they indicate the task to which the delegates must address themselves when they should gather at New Orleans.

We have already mentioned the fact of the dissatisfaction of the Baltimore Conference regarding the anti-slavery action of the General Conference of 1860. This dissatisfaction was not removed by the war and the consequent destruction of slavery; but on February 7, 1866, sixty-nine members of the Baltimore Conference, a body which is said to have maintained an independent existence throughout the war, met at Alexandria, Virginia. Norval Wilson, father of Bishop A. W. Wilson, was chosen president, and J. S. Martin, secretary. On the second day, formal vote was taken on the question of adhering to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, "in pursuance of the action of this body in 1861." The resolution of adherence declared that they were not adhering to "dead political institutions, questions, or issues," and that their motives were to promote "usefulness among the people whom we serve and the best interests of the kingdom of Christ." On the roll call the vote stood 69 to 0 in favor of the adop-

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, March 30, 1871.

tion of the Resolution. Bishop Early, who was in the city by arrangement, was escorted to the chair by S. Register and S. S. Roszell, and he recognized the body as a Conference of the Church, South. On the third day of the General Conference of 1866, Norval Wilson said that the Baltimore Conference came as the result of pledges to their people going back as far as 1845, that they would sever connection with the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, if action should be taken to "disturb the tranquillity of the Church within our bounds." He declared that such action had been taken in 1860, and that by unanimous vote they were keeping their pledge to the people.<sup>3</sup> The delegates of the newly organized Baltimore Conference were seated in the General Conference.

The General Conference met in Carondelet Street Church, New Orleans, April 4, 1866. Eight years had gone by since it last met, four of those years had been taken up with a war which was as disastrous as it was bloody. The Conference was called to order by Bishop J. O. Andrew who read, in tones befitting the solemnity and the faith of the hour, the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." He concluded with that burst of apostolic confidence, "For our God is a consuming fire," and the Conference joined in singing hymn 261, "High on his everlasting throne, the King of saints his work surveys." Ninety delegates answered to the first roll call, and 149 of the 153 dele-

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3 *Ibid.*, March 10, 1866; April 7, 1866.



gates elected were in attendance at the Conference. Dr. Thomas O. Summers was elected secretary, and what was destined to be one of the most constructive and historic General Conferences of the Church was ready for business.

The war and the new social and political issues which the South had been called to face brought no timidity into the counsels of the men who had gone through four years of struggle on the battle fields of the South. The caution of 1846 was completely gone, and the delegates turned to the task of rebuilding the fortunes of the Church, as veterans whose faith and courage had been revealed in the long struggle that had ended. Strangely enough, the Conference was disposed to disregard the constitutional restrictions upon the legislative function, and to give an amazingly wide discretion to the Annual Conferences for determining the application of the enactments of the General Conference. This definitive power, which it was proposed to confer on the Annual Conferences, called forth a written protest from Dr. C. F. Deems, of North Carolina, against what he termed the granting of "reviewing, legislative, and veto" powers to an Annual Conference. At this juncture a compromise was reached, the protest was withdrawn and the measures objected to were modified and made to conform to the constitution of the Church. The explanation of this seemingly radical tendency was probably the fact that the Methodism of the South had to be completely reorganized, and it was done upon the basis of past experience and demand, rather than upon any theory of ecclesiastical administration.

After the enactment of a measure for the introduction of lay-representation into the control of the Church, which we have already discussed, the next important matter to occupy the attention of the Conference was the re-establishment of the missionary work

of the denomination. The China mission, with which there had been no communication during the four years of war, had not been closed, but it had not received support from home. The war over, the Church found itself without either money or credit, and it became necessary to lay anew the financial groundwork for the whole enterprise. As an approach to the problem of rebuilding, the General Conference decided to establish two Mission Boards instead of one, as had been the case since 1846. The Domestic Mission Board, of which Dr. John B. McFerrin was elected secretary, was to promote and administer all missionary enterprises in the homeland. The Foreign Mission Board, of which Dr. E. W. Sehon was elected secretary, was charged with the responsibility for the care and support of work organized and maintained in fields outside the United States.

The most serious problem faced by the Missionary organization of the Southern Church was the large debt which had been contracted before the war. One item of that debt was a matter of serious embarrassment to the entire Church, because of the unintentional manner in which it was incurred and the difficulties which it had involved for friends across the border. No incident in the history of the Church has been more completely misunderstood and misinterpreted than this. Even Bishop McTyeire appears to have been misled,<sup>4</sup> and time has translated the story into an epic of missionary benevolence and denominational chivalry which flouted the passions of war and defied the inhibitions of war administration. Unfortunately there is no real foundation for this fanciful creation. It has been alleged that our China missionaries were paid for a time, after the beginning of the war, through the treasurer of the Mission Board of the Church, North. The facts as

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<sup>4</sup> *A History of Methodism*, McTyeire, p. 665.

given by Dr. Carlton, one of the Book Agents of the Methodist Episcopal Church, are recorded in the proceedings of the General Conference of 1872. He submitted a statement to the effect that in 1858 or 1859, Dr. Sehon, secretary of the Board of Missions of the Southern Church, asked the treasurer of the Missionary Society of the Northern Church how he remitted money to the missionaries in China? He was told that it was done upon letters of credit obtained through Brown Brothers & Company of New York, on Brown, Shipley & Company, London; and that those letters were secured upon the endorsement of the Book Agents, and the Superintendent of the mission in China was authorized to draw from time to time for such sums as might be needed until those letters of credit were exhausted. Dr. Sehon then asked Dr. Carlton to endorse for the Mission Board of the Southern Church as he was doing for the Missionary Society of the Northern Church. Dr. Carlton said that, inasmuch as the Southern Church had granted them the terms that they had asked for in the settlement of the property suit, he could not refuse the endorsement. Accordingly three letters of credit were issued: One on December 7, 1859, for £1200, another on February 1, 1860, for £1634, and the last on June 23, 1860, for £1600. Before it was possible to care for these obligations, the war broke out and the interruption of all communication between the sections made payment by the South impossible. It then devolved upon Dr. Carlton, as endorser for our Board, to care for the obligation, which he did.<sup>5</sup> Whatever technicalities of business may have been involved, it was the endorser of our paper and not the treasurer of the Missionary Society who was primarily involved, it was wholly a pre-war transaction, and whatever magnanimity there

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<sup>5</sup> *Journal of the General Conference, M. E. Church, 1872*, pp. 667, 668, (See also *Biography of John B. McFerrin, Fitzgerald*, p. 294.)

was in it was a reflection of the liberality of the South in the terms granted for the settlement of the property suit.

In March, 1868, Dr. A. L. P. Green, Dr. C. F. Deems, Dr. T. E. Bond, Jr., and Dr. Sehon met the Book Agents in New York and arranged terms for the settlement of the obligation. The total sum paid in principal and interest on this account was \$35,215.02, and the payment was completed by a remittance made on February 2, 1872. In addition to that sum, \$11,000 which was entrusted to W. T. Smithson, the treasurer of the Mission Board, was lost in stock market transactions and he was never able to repay any part of it.<sup>6</sup> Thus ended a distressing chapter in the history of our China mission, but the fascinating story of our missionaries being paid by the treasurer of the Church, North, is not borne out by the facts, and the history of the Church should be interpreted—not embellished.

Among other matters of primary importance which came before the General Conference of 1866, was the question of the rehabilitation of the Publishing House at Nashville. Both the business and the plant were in a state of ruin on account of the war and the appropriation of the stock and the machinery for army uses. There was considerable debate as to whether the Church should undertake to rebuild its publishing business, or should have its printing done by contract. It was finally decided to continue the House, and Dr. A. H. Redford of Kentucky was elected Publishing Agent.

The educational interest of the Conference was registered more in the steps which it undertook for securing a more efficient ministry than in the projection of new or even ambitious plans for the rebuilding of the ruined institutions of the Church. Action was passed to require the licensing of ministers by ballot,

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6 John B. McFerrin, *A Biography*, Fitzgerald, p. 291.



and an approved examination for Admission on Trial, and to establish chairs for instruction in Bible in the existing institutions of learning. Resolutions were passed also to provide instruction in keeping with the "doctrine of infant membership, as held in the Church."

Animated discussion was brought on by the consideration of the Bishops' veto. This extension of episcopal power had been passed by the General Conference of 1854, but it was never submitted to the Annual Conferences for ratification, as a constitutional question. After it had stood for eight years in the Discipline of the Church, its legality was brought into question, and the debate became so general and the challenge so insistent that it was finally postponed indefinitely. In 1870, it was brought forward a second time, and it was then sent down to the Annual Conferences, where it received overwhelming ratification, and thus became a part of the constitution of the Church.

Another matter which was indicative of the mood of the time was the proposal to bring forward from the Journal of the General Conference of 1858 a resolution which was not acted on, but which proposed to change the name to the Methodist Church. The subject had been discussed in 1854. It was now proposed by a Committee on Changes of Economy, and the Conference finally voted to submit the name, Episcopal Methodist Church. The change was not ratified by the Annual Conferences. While the Conference voted to change the name of the Church, it refused to adopt a resolution to abrogate the geographical boundaries which had been established under the action of 1844.

A step of far-reaching importance was the adoption of a measure looking to the setting up of the Negro membership of the Southern Church in a separate Church. Pursuant to this action, the General Conference of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church of

America was organized at Jackson, Tennessee, December 16, 1870. William Henry Miles and Richard H. Vanderhorst were elected Bishops and they were consecrated by Bishop Robert Paine and Bishop Holland N. McTyeire. After a sympathetic address filled with wisdom and a profound interest in the Negro race, Bishop Paine surrendered the chair to Bishop Miles, and the future guidance of the Church to the Bishops who had been elected and consecrated. Bishop McTyeire also delivered a valedictory message to the newly launched Church. The reply of Bishop Vanderhorst to the addresses of his white friends was touching and in every way worthy of the man. He said: "Brothers, say not good-bye; that is a hard word. Say it not. We love you and thank you for all you have done for us. But you must not leave us—never."<sup>7</sup>

Other things done by the Conference were the abrogation of probation for membership, the establishment of "family sittings" in public worship, deletion from the Discipline of the regulations regarding dress, the extension of the pastoral term from two to four years, boundary changes made necessary by the growth of the Church and the results of war, and such revision of the laws as were indicated by the conditions existing and the new outlook of the Church. No previous General Conference ever came to such an opportunity, and it is doubtful if any other Conference ever handled more wisely and constructively the great issues and problems which were then up for settlement. All that it did was not approved, some things which were approved were changed later, and some things which it discussed but failed to do were enacted later, but no other Church council ever handled so many vital questions with such ability and understanding.

An incident of the Conference was the presence of

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<sup>7</sup> *The Christian Advocate*, New Orleans, January 21, 1871.

Rev. Jacob Ditzler, of the Christian Union Church, of Illinois. This organization began in 1863, and was completed at a General Council held at Terra Haute, Indiana, in 1865, in which six state organizations were represented. It is said to have been composed mainly of those who had withdrawn from the Methodist Episcopal Church during the war. The General Conference passed the following Resolution:

“Resolved, That in the interval of the General Conference, if any number of ministers representing a respectable number of churches and congregations, occupying territory not embraced within the prescribed boundaries of any of our Annual Conferences, shall signify and formally express a wish to unite with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and shall give satisfactory assurance that they are cordially willing to be governed by our Discipline, our bishops may organize such district or territory into a Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which shall be entitled to all the rights, privileges and immunities of the other Annual Conferences holding connection with said Church.”<sup>8</sup>

This action did not specifically name any ecclesiastical body, but at a Council of the Christian Union Church, held at Clinton, Illinois, June 7-10, 1867, which was attended by Bishops Doggett and Marvin, the Council resolved to unite with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, under the name of “The Episcopal Methodist Church,” to adopt its hymn book and Discipline, and the Bishops of the Church, South, were asked to take charge of them until the General Conference of 1870. This Bishop Doggett did with the consent of Bishop Marvin. The first session of the Illinois Conference met in Nashville, Illinois, October 16, 1867, with Bishop Doggett presiding. The Confer-

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8 *Journal of the General Conference, M. E. Church, South, 1866*, p. 51.

ence reported forty traveling preachers, seven admitted on trial, sixteen local preachers, twenty-five hundred members, ten church buildings, twenty-seven Sunday Schools, and one thousand and eighty scholars.<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to note in this connection that, although the name Episcopal Methodist Church was rejected by the Annual Conferences, the Illinois Conference continued under that name until the General Conference of 1878 granted permission to change it to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

The delegates who launched the quadrennium, so well begun by the legislation of the General Conference of 1866, came from the council chamber of the Church to find the practical problems a grim reality. On the morning of March 6, 1867, Bishop Joshua Soule died. He had been in feeble health, but no man ranked with him as a tower of strength in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. His going was widely mourned, but the contribution which he made to Methodist law and administration abides until this day. In the summer of 1867, the South had another disastrous visitation of yellow fever and cholera. Worse than the effects of the passing scourge, was a spirit of intolerance which pervaded the religious attitudes of all denominations. Bishop Potter, of the Protestant Episcopal Church in New York, and the establisher of the "subway tavern" in later years, brought Rev. John H. Tyng, Jr., to trial for preaching in a Methodist Church within the parish limits of two rectors of the Church. Tyng had preached in St. James Methodist Church in New Brunswick. His trial was set for January 17, 1868, but was postponed until February 10. He was convicted and censured in the *Church of the Transfiguration*, March 14, 1868.

The first year after the reorganization of 1866, showed a gain in the white membership of more than

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<sup>9</sup> *The Christian Advocate*, New Orleans, June 29, 1867; October 16, 1867.



forty-seven thousand, and a loss in the colored membership of nearly twenty-five thousand. Up to the present time, only three years have shown a recession in the white membership of the Church, South, and those losses were nominal. The losses in the Negro membership continued from year to year until the organization of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in 1870. In 1868, Dr. Schon, who had been Secretary of the Board of Missions since 1860, resigned and Dr. W. G. E. Cunnyingham served as corresponding secretary and Dr. W. E. Munsey was appointed for the last year of the quadrennium, but he was not re-elected in 1870, the honor going to Rev. John B. McFerrin.

In the Methodist Episcopal Church, the events of this period were many and varied. One item which reveals the feeling regarding the old controversies, was that the General Conference at Chicago in 1868, passed a resolution rescinding the censure of Samuel Morris and George Storrs for delivering abolition speeches at Cincinnati, during the General Conference of 1836. On January 6, 1869, Dr. Charles Elliott, the historian of the Separation for the Northern wing of Methodism, died of a stroke of paralysis at Mount Vernon, Iowa. The years of 1870 and 1871 were disastrous years for the episcopacy of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Bishop Thompson died March 22, 1870, Bishop Kingsley died in Bierut, Syria, April 6, 1870, and Bishop Clarke died May 23, 1871. This depletion of the episcopal bench led to the election of eight new bishops in 1872.

An event of Church-wide interest in the South, immediately preceding the session of the General Conference, was the death of Dr. William A. Smith at Richmond, Virginia, March 1, 1870. He was a man who stood at the center of the storm in the most turbulent years of the church and the nation, and he neither

faltered nor compromised on any issue. He was never robed in the gown of the episcopal office, but he carried the authority in his soul. As the defender of Bishop Andrew before the General Conference of 1844, and as a contender for the rights of the Southern Church, his impress upon the history of Methodism was positive and his contribution will not be forgotten.

The General Conference met in Court Square Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Memphis, May 4, 1870, but on the sixth day the sessions were moved to the Second Street Methodist Church, on account of the bad acoustics of the Court Square building. It was not a great Conference in the sense that was true of the previous one, and in the very nature of the case, it would suffer by contrast. There were no such opportunities for constructive and far-reaching legislation as in 1866. But the Conference was made up of men of real ability, as was shown by the report of Dr. L. C. Garland for the Committee on Education. The report took the position that the first need of the ministry was not a technical training in theology, but a broad general education; and that the first task of the Church was to strengthen its literary schools. The East Alabama Male College, located at Auburn, Alabama, had tendered its facilities to the Church for a theological school, but the offer was not accepted; and the Conference took action re-emphasizing the legislation of 1866 regarding the establishment of Chairs of Bible Instruction in Methodist literary institutions.

The Missionary enterprise was again consolidated under one Secretary, to which place Dr. John B. McFerrin was elected. The Sunday school interest, which had rather grown up than been developed, was now organized as a separate department and was to be directed by a General Board. Action was taken to establish a new Monthly Magazine, and the Southern Re-

view, under the editorial direction of that brilliant, but politically minded and theologically daring genius, Alfred Taylor Bledsoe, was adopted. The first issue of the Review, as a Methodist publication, appeared in July following the Conference, but the relationship was destined not to be a happy one. The Church had undertaken to adopt the Review without assuming responsibility for the political and theological views of its editor, and complaints of the political character of the publication greatly affected its usefulness and contributed to an early dissolution of the tie between the Review and the Methodist Church.

At this session, five new Annual Conferences were authorized: The North Mississippi, North Alabama, Western, Los Angeles, and Illinois. The Illinois Conference was set up under the authority of the contingent resolution of 1866 regarding churches and territory not embraced within the bounds of existing Annual Conferences. A District Conference to be composed of all traveling and local ministers and of elected lay delegates was provided for. It is interesting to note in this connection, that in the papers of William Winans was found a manuscript record of an annual District Conference which was held in South Mississippi from 1821 to 1824. Upon the recommendation of the quarterly Conference, it licensed local preachers and recommended preachers to the Annual Conference for Admission on trial. At the session of 1822, held at Adams Camp Ground, Lincoln County, Mississippi, William Curtis, the first agent of the New Orleans Book Depository, was licensed to preach, and in 1824, the record is that William Foster was examined on charges of preaching too long, speaking too loud, and his general capacity for usefulness. His license was not renewed.<sup>10</sup> At that meeting, on motion of Elijah B. McKay, of

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<sup>10</sup> *The Christian Advocate*, Nashville, September 26, 1891.

"Washitta", Louisiana District, the sessions were discontinued. The "New Orleans exception" to the law of ministerial tenure was repealed and the General Conference refused to submit another proposition for the change of the name of the Church. Another matter of interest was the visit of Bishop Janes and Dr. Harris of the Methodist Episcopal Church. They represented a Commission on union with other churches, and while they were treated with perfect courtesy and accorded every kindness, the Conference made it plain that in its judgment the true interests of the Church of Christ at that time required a separate existence, but it expressed the hope that the day might soon come when "proper Christian sentiments and fraternal relations" might be permanently established.

The rapid decline in the Negro membership of the Southern Church seems to have been due to withdrawals in blocs, since an application for a grant of interest in property was denied, on the ground that the properties were held in trust for colored members of the Church, South. This summary gives a fair idea of the work of the General Conference of 1870. The only other incident of the year was the opening of the Church of the Strangers, formerly the Mercer Street Presbyterian Church, in New York. The opening took place on October 16, 1870, the church was presented to Dr. Charles F. Deems by Commodore Vanderbilt and was to be an undenominational enterprise. Like other combinations of business and benevolence built around great personalities, the Church of the Strangers furnished another illustration of the fact that the Church is not a business and religion is more than an organization and a leadership—it is an emotion of the soul and a profound spiritual allegiance of the individual. But it is altogether probable that Dr. Deems did help to deepen the regard of Commodore Vanderbilt for the



South, and in that way the enterprise served as a tie which was not without value to the South.

The period following the General Conference of 1870 was marked by a variety of distresses for Methodism North and South, and for the nation as well. On March 2, 1871, Bishop James O. Andrew died at Mobile, Alabama. His going removed from the Church, South, a man of stainless soul, upon whose head the passions and prejudices of church and state had beaten with ceaseless fury for more than a quarter of a century. On the twenty-second of April following, Rev. Alfred Griffith, the author of the original resolution at the General Conference of 1844, asking Bishop Andrew to resign his office, died at Alexandria, Virginia, in the eighty-eighth year of his age. Thus two men who came into prominence in the most tragic arena of Methodist history had almost a common summons to stand in the presence of Him whom both loved and served, but neither of whom, in all probability, understood the other. On August 19, 1872, Dr. Thomas E. Bond, Jr., died. His father was for a number of years the editor of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*. Dr. Bond, Senior, was opposed to the Plan of Separation, but he stood with equal firmness for a just treatment of the South in the division of the properties of the Church. Dr. Bond, Jr., was connected with the Southern Church and one of the last important services which he rendered was as a representative of that Church in the adjustment of the China Mission debt with Dr. Thomas Carlton of the Book Concern. Another veteran of that stormy period was Bishop John Early, who died at Lynchburg, Virginia, on November 5, 1874, aged eighty-seven years. On September 2, 1874, Bishop Morris, a Kentuckian who adhered to the Methodist Episcopal Church, but who gave to the Southern Church a distinguished son, died. Bishop Morris re-

tained the confidence and esteem of the South to the end of his life. Closely following the death of Bishop Morris was that of Bishop Roberts in Liberia, January 30, 1875.

On February 2, 1872, as has been stated, Dr. A. H. Redford, treasurer of the Mission Board, made the final payment on the debt to the Book Concern in New York, but the respite from financial pressure and the period of rejoicing were of short duration; for on February 15, the Publishing House burned, and the appeal of distress was simply transferred to an equally urgent and necessary cause. A different, but no less serious disaster occurred in the latter part of the year 1874. The North and Northwest sections of the country, the great corn belt, were devastated by a terrible drouth and a scourge of grasshoppers which, as Bishop Keener observed, "made no small reputation, both in church and state." The grasshoppers actually darkened the sun in their flight and they destroyed crops, gardens, and even the leaf and bud of apple and peach trees. An area of some eight or ten thousand square miles was absolutely stripped of vegetation and the people were left destitute.<sup>11</sup>

An extremely irritating circumstance between the two contending Methodisms, was the largeness of the appropriation for Domestic Missions in the South, made by the Methodist Episcopal Church. The amount appropriated for 1872 was \$119,000, and that for 1874 was \$134,000, exclusive of the amounts appropriated for West Virginia and the city of St. Louis. This was commonly regarded as a setting up of Methodist altar against Methodist altar, and the *Christian Advocate*, Nashville, said that it was a fund devoted to purposes of "Disintegration and absorption."<sup>12</sup> Such were the in-

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11 *The Christian Advocate*, New Orleans, October 1, 1874; October 15, 1874.

12 *Ibid.*, December 21, 1871; January 1, 1874.

cidents, the feelings, and the experiences which immediately preceded and were actual accompaniments of the establishment of fraternal relations between the Churches, North and South.

An incident worthy of note, belonging to this period, was the beginning of the modern phase of union revivals, inaugurated at St. Louis with Rev. E. P. Hammond as the evangelist. According to a letter by Bishop Marvin, there were some two thousand conversions and the entire city was profoundly stirred.<sup>13</sup> This movement in simpler form had appeared in Tennessee and Kentucky at the beginning of the century, but it was the camp meeting type led by William McKendree. The new type of revival reached greatness in the South through the genius and consecration of that Prince in Israel, Rev. Sam P. Jones, and its national and international phases were achieved by Dwight L. Moody and Ira L. Sankey. The movement in later years, has probably been abused and even exploited by some who have not altogether appreciated the sacredness of such an opportunity, but it is no less true that it has been the means of good which may not be fully comprehended until the books shall be opened at the last day.

The General Conference of 1874 met in Library Hall, Louisville, Kentucky, on May 1. The reports which were made showed a substantial gain in the membership and a constant progress toward adjustment along all lines. No unusual situation existed in the Church and the legislative achievements of the Conference were expressed more in the revision of existing laws than in the projection of new policies and enterprises. The Church was busy translating the visions of the past into reality, and all that was necessary at this time was the correction of errors that had been discovered, and such adjustments as would make existing legislation

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, April 9, 1874.

more effective in meeting the needs of the Church. The debt of the Mission Board had been paid, and the Methodists were free to face the mission fields with a new interest and with a new feeling of sufficiency for discharging their responsibility to the heathen world.

The outstanding fact of the Conference was the visit of the fraternal messengers of the Methodist Episcopal Church. It was an occasion the recollection of which the members of that General Conference carried to their graves. In the choice of its initial messengers, the Methodist Episcopal Church was very happy. Dr. Albert S. Hunt was an accomplished scholar and a man of wide experience in Methodist affairs. Dr. Charles H. Fowler was an educator, an editor, and a preacher whose eloquence was irresistible. His superb address brought an emotional thrill to every heart and lifted high the fraternal hopes of the hour. General Clinton B. Fisk, who had signed the military order for the return of the Nashville churches to the South, was also known to be a warm personal friend of the South. As a speaker he had a genius all his own. He played upon the heart-cords in his beautiful apostrophe to the veterans of the forties:

"Fond memory to its duty true,  
Brings back each fading form to view;  
How life-like, through the mist of years,  
Each well-remembered face appears."

This tender reference to the heroic band whose tottering forms were lingering in uncertainty and whose fading vision was fixed upon the far horizon swept the emotions of the great throng who came to welcome our brothers from across the border. When that day was done, whatever the reservations of any heart, the issue of fraternity was decided.

The most touching incident of the Conference was



the valedictory address of the ninety-year-old Dr. Lovick Pierce, a veteran of 1844. He said that while the membership of that body looked forward to other such historic gatherings, that for him a grave interposed. The implied prophecy was not literally fulfilled, but the facts were so apparent as to create sorrow and profound regret that, in the order of human events, it must be true at no very distant day. The Conference was thrown into gloom by the death of Dr. Fountain E. Pitts, veteran missionary to Brazil, whose funeral was conducted from Walnut Street Church on the afternoon of May 23. Dr. A. L. P. Green, in the eighty-fourth year of his age was forced to leave the seat of the Conference on account of his health, and he died in Nashville, on July 15. Dr. T. L. Maddin, another veteran of 1844, died on June 15, preceding the death of Dr. Green. And so it happened that within a space of less than two months those three veteran warriors died, their worn bodies were consigned to the dust in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Nashville, and their spirits joined the blood-washed throng in the sky.

No outstanding event of Methodist history occurred during the next two years, and the Churches, North and South, were earnestly engaged in expansion and in laying a foundation for meeting their whole responsibility to the world. The Church, South, was strongly intrenched in the life of that section, and not more in rural communities than in the cities. A comparison of church statistics with the census returns revealed the fact that in Atlanta, Georgia, one of every seven of the white population was a Methodist, in Nashville, one of every twenty-one, and in Richmond, one of every fifteen. The least favorable ratio in any Southern city, except St. Louis, Baltimore and New Orleans, was one to thirty-nine. Even in New Orleans, Romanist as it was, the ratio was one to one hundred and thirty-four.

The representatives of the Southern Church at the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church of 1876, were the venerable Rev. Dr. Lovick Pierce, Rev. Dr. James A. Duncan, and Dr. L. C. Garland. There was a romantic interest which attached to Dr. Pierce as the rejected suitor of 1848, and on account of his extreme age, he being ninety-two years old. He was too feeble to attend the Conference, however, and his address was read to the body. In view of the eloquence and the ability of those who were the fraternal messengers to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1874, Dr. Duncan and Dr. Garland faced a most difficult situation personally, as well as officially. But they met the challenge of the hour in a manner worthy of the men themselves and of the Church which they represented. Dr. Garland's address was clear, pointed and scholarly; and Dr. Duncan, from the very first paragraph to the close of his eloquent and masterly address swept his audience as only few men could do. Dr. James M. Buckley quoted his opening paragraph in full, and he said of it: "Never in the history of American Methodism was an impression more delightful and profound made by a single paragraph than by his exordium, which was delivered in a manner worthy of the traditions of Cicero."<sup>14</sup> In August following, as we have noted already, the Cape May Commission translated the emotions of the fraternal exchanges between the long estranged hosts of Wesley into a bond of mutual understanding and friendship which largely settled the harrassing questions of a generation.

But this glorious year was not to close without its touch of sorrow. On June 27, Dr. E. W. Sehon, who for twenty-eight years was Secretary of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, died of a paralytic stroke at Louisville, Kentucky. On Octo-

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<sup>14</sup> *A History of Methodism in the United States*, Buckley, Vol. II., pp. 329, 330.

ber 5, Dr. E. H. Myers, who had been a worthy representative of Southern Methodism on the Cape May Commission, fell a victim of yellow fever in Savannah, Georgia. And on October 19, Dr. John P. Durbin, a stalwart figure of the Methodist Episcopal Church, came to the close of his distinguished career.

With the settlement arranged by the Cape May Commission and the establishment of fraternal relations between the two great branches of Episcopal Methodism, the regime of ecclesiastical strife was formally ended—a consummation too long delayed, for even Appomattox was fast becoming a faded recollection, and the dis-severed secular ties were well on the way to perfect healing. It is as superficial as it is common for people to assert that General Lee surrendered at Appomattox in 1865, but the Church continued the struggle for three-quarters of a century after. The signing of the articles of capitulation and surrender, in the very nature of the case, related only to military operations and the official status of the soldiers of the National and the Confederate governments. The Church has had to combat within its ranks the backwash of selfishness, prejudice and hate which the war developed, but there has not been a day in all these weary years when its idealism and its heart have not been a bow-shot in advance of the leaden-footed politician and critic who would discredit its labors and its leadership.





## CHAPTER XII

### PEACE AND PROGRESS

**A**FTER the year 1876, the two co-ordinate branches of American Episcopal Methodism, having entered into an agreement for the settlement of issues which had disturbed their ecclesiastical peace for a generation, turned each to its own work and way. Partisan feelings and attitudes did not subside immediately, as all might have wished, but the bond to which both groups gave approval officially ended all old grounds for continued contest and controversy. At the South, the years which followed were occupied with the problems of rehabilitation and the routine of administration. The official settlement of the controverted issues did not, however, clear the way for an easy and an unimpeded progress on the part of the Southern Church, for the rebuilding of its material fortune following the war was not something that might be accomplished in a day or even a decade. Every substantial factor of progress was compelled, therefore, to bide a time when the fortunes of the Southern people might be recouped, or when friends, better circumstanced than themselves, might come to their rescue.

The first among the wealthy men of the North to become interested in the South was Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt. He it was who laid the foundation for a new educational hope in the Southern Church. As the founder of Vanderbilt University, which event we will notice later, he became the first influential patron

of Methodist education in the South after the war. But almost before the wonder of his splendid gesture was past, his life came to a close. His death occurred on January 4, 1877, in the eighty-third year of his age. In addition to the tie which he had with the South through the connection of his family with that of Bishop Holland N. McTyeire, he had been a bondsman for the release of Mr. Jefferson Davis, the President of the Confederacy, who was imprisoned at the close of the conflict. If Mr. Vanderbilt could have lived for a few years longer, he might have made a larger and a more lasting contribution to the peace of the sections and to the progress of Southern education. But, as it was, he opened the way for the manifestation of a friendly interest toward the South and the Southern Methodist Church.

The year 1877 was disastrous for the leadership of the Methodism of the South. Four distinguished names were blotted from its scroll by the hand of the ruthless Reaper. The first was that of Dr. James A. Duncan, of Virginia, who died on September 24, 1877. He was president of Randolph-Macon College and was our Ambassador of Reconciliation at the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1876. His death came just as he appeared to be upon the threshold of a great career of usefulness and Christian leadership. In the last days of October, Dr. William E. Munsey died at Jonesboro, Tennessee. His golden voice had been heard pleading the cause of Methodist missions and appealing for the maintenance of Methodist honor throughout the length and breadth of the South, and he was probably the most distinguished orator of the Southern pulpit in that day.

On November 26, Bishop Enoch M. Marvin succumbed to an attack of pneumonia at St. Louis. Although self-educated, he was one of the ablest and the





IVY-COVERED BUILDINGS OF WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY,  
MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT



most self-sacrificing ministers of the denomination. He had just returned from his visit to China and his circuit of the globe, and he was just fairly launched upon what promised to be a brilliant episcopal career. His father does not seem to have ever made a profession of Christianity and his mother was a Baptist. He left St. Louis during the war and served as a chaplain of the Confederate armies in Texas and Arkansas. At the close of the war, he was appointed to the church in Marshall, Texas, and he was elected to the Episcopacy on the first ballot at the General Conference of 1866. He had not been elected a delegate to the Conference and, because he was being mentioned for the Episcopal office, he refused to attend the session until after his election. In his first episcopal assignment, he visited the impoverished and friendless Indians of the West, and their pathetic plight made such an appeal to his heart that he drew upon himself for five thousand dollars and thus saved the Indian mission enterprise of the Church. About two months before his death, he was presiding at the session of the Missouri Conference when his brother died at a distance of a day's journey from the seat of the Conference, but such was his devotion to duty that he refused the melancholy privilege of standing at the bier of his brother and continued with the work of the Conference. His funeral was held on Thanksgiving Day in the very church and at the hour when he was himself to have been the preacher.

The last great name removed from the roll of distinguished Methodist leaders in 1877 was that of Alfred Taylor Bledsoe, who died at Alexandria, Virginia, on December 11. By his death, the Church and the South lost one of its most brilliant and versatile men. He was a distinguished mathematician, an eminent theologian and, for a number of years, he had been the

editor of the *Southern Review*. Although he was advanced in years and ill unto death, when he died he left sufficient material, prepared for the press and corrected by himself, for a whole year of the *Review*. He was not a popular writer, and his productions were not influenced by the atmosphere of the moment, but his thoughts were matured in the laboratory of his great mind. At his own request, he was buried in the graveyard of the University of Virginia, to which he had given a large part of his life. Thus ended a year of tragic losses to the ranks of eminent Methodists of the South.

The General Conference met in Atlanta, Georgia, May 1, 1878, but it was so occupied with contested matters that little constructive work was accomplished. The Illinois Conference was granted permission to change its name from the Episcopal Methodist Church, the name which it assumed when it came under the jurisdiction of the Church, South, to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Approval was given to the proposition for holding an Ecumenical Conference of Methodists at Wesley's Chapel, City Roads, London, in 1881, and also to the proposed Centenary of American Methodism in Baltimore, December 25, 1884. Dr. Linus Parker, the editor of the New Orleans Christian Advocate, a delegate from the Louisiana Conference and afterward Bishop, said of the General Conference: "Nothing of much importance was done, and nearly all that was done was of doubtful utility."

At the outset, the delegates joined in a heated contest over the seating of Logan D. Dameron, a lay delegate from the St. Louis Conference. It appears that Dameron had been deprived of his membership in the church because of some trouble, and while his membership had been restored, the time after the restoration had not been sufficient to meet the constitutional

requirement for membership in the General Conference. Majority and minority reports were submitted and each was defeated by the slender margin of two votes. In that unfortunate deadlock, the Conference wrangled for sixteen days, and a solution of the problem was finally reached through an episcopal decision handed down by Bishop Pierce, which held that Dameron was not a delegate *de jure*, but a delegate *de facto*. In that connection, one thing must be admitted: The author of that decision deserves to be mentioned along with Solomon for shrewdness and discrimination. The animus of the contest was registered throughout the Conference session and particularly in the voting for connectional officers. Dameron received twenty-six votes for Book Agent. It should be said for the credit of Mr. Dameron that, both during the session of the Conference and afterward, his bearing and deportment were altogether creditable and worthy of a Christian gentleman.

The second contest grew out of a more serious matter. It involved the Publishing House and was brought forward by the report of the Committee on Publishing Interests. We have noted already that one of the first tasks of the Church after the war was the re-establishment of its publishing business which had been reduced to ruin by the Federal forces occupying Nashville. During the year 1877, Dr. A. H. Redford, the Book Agent, raised approximately \$30,000 for the relief of the Publishing House, and his report to the General Conference showed that the Church had an equity in the business of \$298,582.87. The Committee on Publishing Interests, however, revised the figures so as to show a deficit of \$46,890.85, and a floating debt with interest obligations amounting to \$60 per day. Dr. Redford was charged with "injudicious expenditure in building," "excessive and injudicious credit," "high rates of inter-

est and discount, and cost of exchange under the methods of business adopted and carried on by the Agent," and the arraignment concluded with the conveniently climacteric and hysteria-producing "high salaries." A minority report, agreeing with the facts as stated by the majority, but recommending the abandonment of the manufacturing end of the business, was defeated. The Conference refused to modify the terms of censure, and the working out of the problems of the House was left to the Book Committee which was raised from nine to thirteen. Dr. John B. McFerrin, who was the Chairman of the Committee on Publishing Interests, was elected Book Agent. At the Conference four years later, the issue was revived, although Dr. Redford was not a member of the Conference. Dr. Redford died at Bowling Green, Kentucky, on October 17, 1884. He was humiliated and crushed, but his faith and loyalty were not destroyed. It is said that he was not a good business man, but that he was a man of great energy and of unsullied honor. He served the Church for twelve years in the most critical period of the history of the Publishing House. We do not believe that the facts justified the strictures of the report of the Committee on Publishing Interests, and we do not think that the action of the Conference was just to the man who gave of his best to the Church.

Other matters of secondary importance received consideration, but failed to be incorporated into the law of the Church. A curious form of the Judicial Conference was the proposal to create an appellate court for each annual Conference, but it was not adopted. Many memorials on the subject of the presiding eldership were presented to the body, but all that was done was to raise the number of charges in a District from fourteen to twenty. The adjournment on May 24, brought



to a close a heated but unproductive session of the law-making body of the Church.

The years immediately following the General Conference of 1878 were not rich in historical incidents, but they were neither barren nor unfruitful years. The Church moved forward in a regular and uneventful way, solidifying its position and extending its influence in a manner to meet its responsibility to the people. There was serious interruption of every activity of the South during the summer and fall of 1878. A scourge of yellow fever of unusual malignancy spread over a great part of the South. Not only were the coast cities affected, but almost the whole of Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee was stricken. The health authorities of the city of New Orleans reported ten thousand cases and four thousand deaths. At Vicksburg, Mississippi, Rev. Charles B. Galloway, afterward Bishop, was reported to have succumbed to the disease and a mourning notice announcing his death appeared in an extra edition of *The Clarion* in Jackson. Memphis and St. Louis were among the places afflicted, and it was probably the most fatal type of fever that ever became epidemic in the South.

Two events were of special interest and brought sorrow to the entire Church. The first was the death of the venerable and beloved Lovick Pierce. His death occurred at Sparta, Georgia, November 9, 1879. No single life was more completely intertwined with the history of Methodism in the South, nor was any other more interesting and unique. Born March 24, 1785, his life was co-extensive with the history of American Methodism. He came to his life-work with little educational preparation, except such as he acquired for himself and that largely in the school of experience. He was admitted on trial at Charleston, South Carolina, January 1, 1805. In December, 1806, he was or-

dained by Bishop Asbury at the house of John Lucas in the very town where he died. He was made a presiding elder at the age of twenty-four years, and while presiding elder, in 1812, he brought up James O. Andrew for admission on trial. He was a chaplain in the War of 1812. He was at the center of the storm which resulted in the disruption of the Methodist Church in 1844, and he it was who gave notice that a protest would be filed against the action on the case of Bishop Andrew. As fraternal messenger to the Methodist Episcopal Church at Pittsburg, he was the rejected suitor of 1848, and he lived to have his commission renewed in 1876, but he was too aged and infirm to reach the seat of the Conference. When he was past his ninety-fourth milestone and the hour of his translation was almost at hand he said to his distinguished son, Bishop George F. Pierce, "that he might say to the Church and his friends that he died just outside of Heaven."<sup>1</sup> Not long after he gave that message the patriarch of Southern Methodism, whose faith had been tested in a furnace of fire, went home and another illustrious name was added to the roll of heroes of whom the world was not worthy. In Columbus, Georgia, his mortal remains await the resurrection of the just.

The other incident of special importance was the death of Bishop David Seth Doggett at Richmond, Virginia, October 27, 1880. Bishop Doggett was elevated to the episcopacy by the General Conference of 1866. At the time of his death he was in his seventy-first year, he had served acceptably as a bishop for fourteen years, and he died after a painful illness of more than two months.

An event of more than passing interest in the China mission was the announcement made through an edi-

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<sup>1</sup> *The Christian Advocate*, New Orleans, August 21, 1879.

torial which appeared in the *North China Daily News* of September 6, 1881, that Dr. Young J. Allen, the veteran missionary of the Southern Methodist Church, was to open a college in Shanghai. The building, which was to be the first unit of the Anglo-Chinese College, was to be opened at the Chinese New Year, was to be located near the church of Dr. Allen on the southwest corner of the French Concession, was to be a two-story building sixty-two feet long and thirty-eight feet wide, and would accomodate from two hundred and fifty to three hundred pupils.<sup>2</sup> The school was opened on March 9, 1882, with two hundred pupils in attendance, and one hundred were turned away for lack of room.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Allen's popularity with the business and political leaders of China was a great asset in the promotion of this early educational venture in connection with the foreign mission work of the Church, and it has probably been one of the most valuable and successful of the mission-supported educational enterprises of the Orient. Dr. Allen went to his eternal reward many years ago, but his work in the field of Chinese education abides until this day.

The year 1882 was made memorable by a disaster which befell a large area in the central part of the South. Early in the spring, the Mississippi River registered an unprecedented high-water stage, the levee system, which was wholly insufficient for the strain, properties valued at millions of dollars in Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana were swept away by flood waters which spread over the land. The people living in the devastated area were reduced to poverty and want, and sickness was added to their destitution. Such was the distress that the Federal Government found it necessary to appropriate \$100,000 for relief—

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Nov. 17, 1881.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, April 13, 1882.

a fabulous sum in that day. In some instances, the houses in towns and villages were almost completely submerged. As the waters receded, cotton and corn were planted and in some sections a fair crop was harvested despite the disaster; but in Louisiana, where the raising of sugar cane was a chief industry, no crop was possible until the succeeding year.

The losses to the Church by death during 1882 included Bishop William Wightman, February 15, Dr. Leroy M. Lee, April 20; Dr. Thomas O. Summers, May 6; and Bishop Robert Paine, October 19. Dr. Summers had been elected secretary of the General Conference then in session at Nashville, Tennessee. On the first two days, he discharged the duties of his position and there was no indication of the approach of illness, but he became ill during the night of the second day, at 4 o'clock on the afternoon of the third day he was in a stupor and the end came at 6 o'clock the next morning. His death was a shock to the Conference and, indeed, to the entire Church. He was a prodigious worker. As editor, compiler of the new hymn book, university professor, literary critic for the Church and a constant and able defender of its faith, he did a monumental and an abiding work.

On behalf of the College of Bishops, Bishop Paine read the Episcopal Address to the General Conference; and he afterward read, as a matter of personal privilege, a statement which he had deliberately thought out. On account of his age and his physical infirmities, he asked to be relieved of duty. He was then in his eighty-third year and his health was seriously impaired. His retirement was regretted by the entire Church. His first membership in the General Conference was in 1824, and he was connected with every succeeding General Conference of his Church from that day to the end of his life. He was a veteran of the



anti-slavery struggle which resulted in the dismemberment of the Church in 1844. He was the chairman of the Committee on Nine which drew up the Plan of Separation. Along with William Capers, he was elected a bishop at the first General Conference of the Church, South, in 1846. For thirty-six years, through a time of bitter sectional controversy, the horrors and distresses of a bloody civil war, and the more difficult era of Reconstruction, he served as a bishop of his Church and always and everywhere with fidelity, honor and effectiveness. At the close of the General Conference, the aged and weary veteran retired to his home at Aberdeen, Mississippi, where on October 19, following, he answered the summons from the sky and his noble spirit entered triumphantly into the rest that remains for the people of God.

The Church Extension organization which began as disconnected societies in the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1864 was organized into a Church-wide society in 1872. In 1881, the movement was taken up by the African Methodist Episcopal Church in what was designated as a "Debt Fund" of \$100,000. It was really a loan fund for the relief of churches that were embarrassed by building debts. The money was to be available at a low rate of interest and with easy terms of repayment. At the same time, that Church of 500,000 Negroes appropriated \$76,000 for its mission work and \$185,000 for educational expansion.<sup>4</sup> As an example of faith and daring, such is a chapter worthy of the best traditions of Methodism.

An event of world-wide Methodist interest was the assembling of the first Ecumenical Conference of Methodism in Wesley's Chapel, City Roads, London, on September 7, 1881. The delegates came from every land where the Societies of Wesley were organized.

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, July 7, 1881.

The meeting was made sorrowful by reason of the fact that President James A. Garfield was lingering at the point of death on account of an assassin's bullet. The Conference had no recognized legal status in Methodism, and it was a meeting for fellowship and for an exchange of views on Methodist interests throughout the world. Its effect was to fire the hosts of Wesley with a new sense of their unity and responsibility, and it was agreed to continue the organization as a decennial Conference. The sermon of the occasion was preached by Bishop Matthew Simpson of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and it was truly worthy of the man and the orator that he was. Perhaps one of the chief effects of this Conference was the large emphasis given to the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification as a distinct work of grace. It was advocated by many of the representatives, and particularly by the devout and the spirit-filled, William Arthur, known throughout the Christian world for his book, "The Tongue of Fire."<sup>5</sup>

About this time, the bench of Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church was greatly reduced by death. Bishop E. R. Janes died on September 18, 1876; Bishop E. R. Ames, April 25, 1879; Bishop E. O. Haven, August 2, 1881; Bishop Levi Scott, July 13, 1882; and Bishop J. T. Peck, May, 1883. For the replacement of its losses from death and otherwise, the General Conference of 1880 elected three Bishops. They were H. W. Warren, Cyrus D. Foss, and John F. Hurst.

The General Conference met in McKendree Church, Nashville, May 3, 1882. Judged by the volume of constructive statutes enacted, it could not be called a great Conference, but one measure redeemed it from commonplaceness. The action creating the Church Extension Society, of which Dr. David Morton was elected the

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, September 22, 1881.

General Secretary, was one of the wisest and most productive pieces of legislation in the history of the Church. The Society has given a consistent and an intelligent direction to the expansion of the Church; and, in a time of financial stringency, it has done much to sustain church progress and to stabilize and save local situations. Under instruction from the General Conference of 1906, it promoted and brought to completion the "Representative Church" at Washington, D. C. This property is now valued at more than a half million dollars, and is one of the outstanding achievements of the Society. In the course of the fifty years of its history, it has aided more than twelve thousand churches, disbursed approximately five million dollars in donations, and has built up a permanent loan-fund capital of more than three million dollars. During the past decade, it has been to hundreds of debt-burdened churches as the shadow of a rock in a weary land, and no other institution, charged with the responsibility of administering great sums of money has pursued a sounder financial policy, or exhibited better business ability in the management of its affairs.

At that Conference, there was renewed agitation for a change of the name of the Church, and the name, Episcopal Methodist Church in America, was submitted for the ratification of the Annual Conferences. Happily, as it appears now, the Annual Conferences were wise enough to reject a name which would inevitably have confused the history of the Church, and whose adoption would have achieved nothing substantial for the interests of the Methodists in the South. It might have been some satisfaction to have had the sectional implication removed, but after all, it was an original designation and nothing more.

The Conference authorized the Bishops, with the concurrence of the Board of Missions, to erect into mis-

sion Conferences during the succeeding quadrennium, the missions in China, Central Mexico and on the Mexican Border. For the replacement of losses and to care for the growth of the Church, five new Bishops were elected. They were Alpheus W. Wilson, Linus Parker, Robert K. Hargrove, John C. Granbery and Atticus G. Haygood. On account of the need for his continuance at Emory College, Dr. Haygood declined consecration. He was elected again and consecrated, along with Oscar P. Fitzgerald, in 1890.

An incident which occurred in the proceedings of the sixth day, after the lapse of nearly half a century, gives an almost humorous touch to the attitude and action of the Conference. Rev. O. R. Blue, a clerical delegate from the Alabama Conference, asked for an investigation of a report which was being circulated against Mr. Samuel Cupples, a lay delegate from the St. Louis Conference. It was alleged that Mr. Cupples had given a dance at his home in St. Louis after his election as a delegate to the General Conference. A committee of one from each Annual Conference in the connection was appointed to investigate the charge. After two days deliberation thirty-five delegates reported that they had gone into the matter thoroughly, that Mr. Cupples had been reprimanded by his pastor already, and that the law of the Church had been vindicated. Aside from what appears to be its humor now, the incident reveals the fight of the Church for the preservation of the spiritual integrity of its soul and the moral purity of its life.

The year 1884 was occupied mainly with a nationwide celebration of the Centennial of American Methodism. The Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in the city of Baltimore at the Christmas Conference of 1784, and what was at that time a poor and an unpromising enterprise had weathered the storms of a



hundred years and had become a mighty force in the life of the nation. Despite internal contests and dismemberments, there was still the consciousness of a unity of interest and purpose in all the groups which had sprung from a common ecclesiastical parentage. At Methodist firesides and at public gatherings throughout the land, the struggles and triumphs of the Church were recounted, from the lowliest hamlet to the great metropolitan centers, public celebrations were held, and a year of fellowship and rejoicing was brought to a close with a great Christmas gathering at Baltimore in which all branches of Methodism participated. The very spot, which one hundred years before had witnessed the proceedings in which Dr. Thomas Coke, as the representative of Mr. Wesley, met with less than one hundred unordained itinerants and inaugurated the Methodist Episcopal Church, now saw a brilliant gathering from every part of the Union, representatives of a church that counted its communicants by the millions.

The losses by death during this period, included Bishop Hubbard H. Kavanaugh, March 19, 1884; Bishop George F. Pierce, September 3, 1884; and Bishop Linus Parker, March 5, 1885. Bishop Kavanaugh was a sturdy type and came to the end of his career in the enjoyment of the confidence and esteem of the entire Church. Bishop Pierce was one of the few survivors of 1844, upon occasions he was probably the most eloquent preacher in the Church, South, and he was widely beloved. Bishop Parker fell at the very beginning of what promised to be a career of usefulness and service. The suddenness of his going was a shock to all. During Tuesday night, he complained of a pain in his ear, but little was thought of it. A physician was called on Wednesday afternoon, but about the time of his arrival, the Bishop lapsed into unconsciousness and the end came early Thursday morning.

Deaths in the Methodist Episcopal Church were Bishop Matthew Simpson, June 18, 1884; and Bishop Wiley, who died while holding the China Mission Conference at Foochow, November 22, 1884. Bishop Simpson was the most able, influential, and beloved leader of the Methodist Episcopal Church of that period. He was a truly great preacher and he possessed qualities of administrative leadership which won a place for him among all classes and in all spheres of public interest. He achieved national fame by his editorials in support of the Federal government during the secession crisis and the war which followed. Mr. Lincoln was not a Methodist, but the choice of a preacher for his funeral fell upon Bishop Simpson, and regardless of interest or feeling as to that melancholy event, no worthier choice could have been made. The Bishops elected in 1884 were William X. Ninde, John M. Walden, W. F. Mallalieu, and Charles H. Fowler. William Taylor, the most colorful figure of the missionary enterprise, was elected Bishop for Africa. Bishop Taylor was an example and an advocate of the Pauline practice of self-support both for the missionary and the mission church. Such he held to be necessary to the self-respect and the individuality of mission congregations. He was criticised by the missionary leadership of the churches, but it is not unlikely that his was nearer a correct policy and practice than was that of his critics. The election of a missionary bishop was the beginning of an episcopal policy for the Methodist Episcopal Church which was continued until 1932.

The General Conference of the Southern Church convened in Centenary Church, Richmond, Virginia, May 5, 1886. Except for routine matters and incidental changes in the Discipline, almost nothing was done. Two full days of a short session were spent in the discussion and the adoption of rules for the government

of the body. A paper asking for the enactment of legislation for the setting up of a "Judicial Conference" was offered by Col. W. L. Nugent, of the Mississippi Conference, with Charles B. Galloway as co-signer. A resolution which was adopted provided for a temporary appellate court to be made up of nine members to be chosen from adjoining Conferences, whose decision was to be final. Doctors Wallace A. Duncan, Charles B. Galloway, Eugene R. Hendrix, and Joseph S. Key were elected Bishops. The Conference adjourned May 25.

The progress of Southern Methodism during this period cannot be determined by any particular action or series of events. Even the General Conferences offer little indication of the changes that were really taking place. It was a period in which the whole Church was moving forward along all lines of interest and work, and was moving up in its ideals. From that point of view, it is likely that no period of Methodist history presents a more substantial and impressive record of advance than do the years covered by this chapter. The periodical literature indicates uneventfulness, and it is only as one looks at the total picture that the signs of progress become evident and the vitality of Methodist influence becomes convincing.

It was a time of doctrinal discussion and with such there was, of necessity, a degree of interdenominational controversy. Inside the Church the discussions were doctrinal in character rather than a critical examination of Scripture. The matters discussed were often of a rather speculative nature and they appear now to have been more academic than practical, but the total effect was to clarify the thinking of the Methodists on the vital issues of Christian life and experience. The recentness of the struggle between the sections, in which the Methodisms, North and South, were directly involved, made a degree of sensitiveness

inevitable. As was to be expected, the Church, South, was sensitive regarding any suggestion which even implied its subordination, it was quick to deny any intimation of a lack of self-sufficiency, and it was, perhaps, inordinately jealous of its position as an integral and original unit of the Wesleyan movement.

Notwithstanding the feeling of sensitiveness just indicated, there was manifest a deepening interest in the spiritual emphasis of the Wesleyan movement. Mention has already been made of the revival of the emphasis upon the doctrine of entire sanctification. The cause of "holiness" had enlisted pronounced supporters from time to time, but the efforts were disconnected and individualistic and there was no united movement in that direction until about 1880. At that time, Holiness Associations were organized, and a National Holiness Camp-Meeting Association was launched. As we have observed, the influence of the London Ecumenical Conference of 1881 was rather on the side of that movement. What might be called the militant phase of the controversy in the South was reached about 1890. The peculiar theory of sanctification encountered such pronounced opposition that there was considerable division, and in some localities there developed what became known as a "come-out" movement which resulted in the organization of independent holiness groups. Some of those groups coalesced to form the Church of the Nazarenes, so named in 1919. Whether one agrees or disagrees with the process of sanctification taught, the movement probably did good by its revival of thought and interest in the doctrine and practice of vital godliness, which was an underlying teaching of the Wesleys.

Another major trend at this time was a revival of interest in the mission enterprises of the Church. A growth of the feeling of responsibility for the evangel-



ization of the world was manifest everywhere. In 1887, this feeling was fanned into a flame of interest and fervor by a church-wide campaign. Mass meetings were held in various cities throughout the connection, and the Bishops of the Church took the field for a better support of missions and a widening of the missionary borders of Southern Methodism. Bishop Wilson wrote extensively from the Orient, whither he had gone as the official representative of the Church, and the whole of Southern Methodism was made to feel the fire of a new enthusiasm for the Christianization of all lands. The work in China, established before the War, began at this time to lay a permanent foundation in the life and literature of the Chinese people. In 1868, Dr. Young J. Allen began the publication of a weekly called *The Chinese Globe Magazine*. The Magazine was later divided into two monthly publications: *The Review of the Times*, and *The Missionary Review*. Dr. Allen continued his publishing work for more than a quarter of a century and by it he greatly strengthened the cause of Christian missions. In 1871, the Mexican work of the Southern Church was instituted, and in 1876, Rev. J. J. Ransom was sent to Brazil where he spent five years in prospecting and language study. A permanent mission was established in 1881. At the meeting of the Board of Missions in 1885, the sum of \$3,000 was appropriated for the opening of a mission in Japan. For that difficult responsibility, Dr. J. W. Lambuth, Dr. Walter R. Lambuth and Rev. O. A. Dukes were chosen. They with their families went at once to the field, and the mission was formally opened by Bishop A. W. Wilson, September 17, 1886. It was made into an Annual Conference in 1892, and in 1907 it was merged with the other Methodisms operating in the Empire, for the formation of the Japan Methodist Church. Dr. J. W. Lambuth died April 28, 1892, and Dr. Walter R. Lambuth, for

reasons of health, was forced to return to America, where he was made a secretary of the Board of Missions. Work in Korea was opened by Dr. C. F. Reid in 1894, and Bishop Lambuth and Dr. W. G. Cram opened work in Siberia in 1921. Missionary work in Cuba began in 1899, during the period of occupation by the United States. The mission was formally organized in 1918, and it became an Annual Conference in 1922. Africa was one of the neediest fields and was one of the earliest to enlist the attention of the Southern Church, but not until after Bishop Lambuth and Professor John Wesley Gilbert, of Paine College, had made a pioneering expedition was the mission in the Belgian Congo opened, February 12, 1914. Work in Europe was established in Belgium, Poland, and Czechoslovakia in 1920. It was largely a work of rehabilitation following the War, and the difficulties encountered ultimately made withdrawal necessary.

It was during this same period that the work of the women assumed the form of a connectional organization. In 1878, the General Conference gave permission for the setting up of a missionary organization for the women of the Church, and the organization was effected at Atlanta, Georgia, May 23, 1878, with Mrs. Juliana Hayes of Baltimore as the first President. Previous to this connectional organization, an organized form of the work of the women had appeared in many places. The Woman's Bible Mission had been organized by Mrs. M. L. Kelly at Nashville in 1873, Mrs. Juliana Hayes had organized the Trinity Home Mission at Baltimore, and a similar group had appeared in New Orleans. Probably the earliest recorded instance of organized work of the women was at Washington, Mississippi. According to a pamphlet published in Natchez, and preserved in the papers of Dr. William Winans, the Mission Female Assistance Society was organized, July 23,

1826, with Mrs. John C. Burruss, President, Mrs. C. M. Thayer, Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. M. H. Burruss, Recording Secretary, and Mrs. Judith Lemon, Treasurer. The pamphlet gives the organization and purpose in detail and names fifteen women who were "directresses" of the Society.<sup>6</sup>

The growth of sentiment on social problems was probably one of the most marked evidences of progress in the South. The sweat-shops and the problems peculiar to congested populations aroused little interest among the rank and file of Southern Methodists, because theirs was a rural section. But the curse of the drink evil, the iniquity of the crossroads saloon and intrenched forms of gambling, particularly the Louisiana Lottery, were social and economic curses whose baleful influence needed not to be established by argument. The Southern Church, being free from a tincture of European ideals and practices, took the lead in securing measures for gambling reform and the suppression of drink evils—a leadership which it has not lost even yet. The support of Prohibition by the Southern Methodist Church was of inestimable value in the long crusade which resulted in the adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment of the Federal Constitution. In the backwash of repeal sentiment and propaganda, the moral idealism of the Church has suffered much, but it still furnishes some of the most obstinate and effective resistance being offered to the wretched betrayal of the moral and spiritual interests of the American people.

Southern Methodism and the Negro forms a worthy chapter in the progress of this era in the history of the Church. The development of the Southern attitude toward the Negro race is not less impressive than its stand for moral reforms. The position of the South

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<sup>6</sup> *The Christian Advocate*, Nashville, Sept. 26, 1891.

was complicated and embarrassed by the activities of well-meaning people who were utterly detached from the situation, and people who were more or less influenced by political and war prejudices against the South. But, despite all that, the real and substantial contributions toward the permanent adjustment of race problems have originated and been worked out in the South and by Southern men. To such leadership, Southern Methodism made a worthy contribution. The problems of race relations have been made difficult by a race consciousness in ourselves, often more positive than we have realized. It is doubtful if the Southern Negro realizes what the Southern man has had to overcome in the imperfect and inadequate efforts which he has put forth. It was no easy matter to reverse the feelings and attitudes toward a race that had been born and bred at the footstool of the regnant civilization of the South. It was easy enough for the Bishops of 1858 to say of the immortal founder of "missions to the slaves of Carolina"; "He requires no eulogy from us, nor will he ever need a monument to perpetuate his name while the missions to the slaves of Carolina continue to exist, or while they shall be remembered by succeeding generations;" but William Capers and the men who shared with him that noble philanthropy knew as did no others at what a price they had purchased their crown of immortality. From the days of Asbury, censure and a degree of social ostracism were the portion of those who gave themselves to the task of helping the Negro forward and upward, and Capers, crowned, was no exception.

It is not uncommon to hear reference, even yet, to the activities of the Ku-Klux Klan as an incontestible proof of an unworthy attitude toward the Negro. The wrong of such a method and organization may be frankly admitted, but it was not different from the



“White Caps” of Indiana and Ohio, and the more genteel “Law and Order Leagues” of other sections. They were all secret combinations of men, for doing doubtful things in an irregular and a protected way.

Yet, for all the unfortunate and deplorable atmosphere and feeling, Methodism in the South found its way to a new day in social interpretation and attitude. The pioneers of this new phase of social and race thinking were Atticus G. Haygood, of Georgia, and Charles B. Galloway, of Mississippi. Dr. Haygood, speaking at Holly Springs, Miss., paid high tribute to the Negro race. He declared that in the course of two hundred and fifty years he had made the journey from savagery to a state of civilized life, and that his progress in the twenty-five years since emancipation was one of the marvels of history. But there he had to draw up and confess that efforts for his larger emancipation were handicapped by race prejudices in the South.<sup>7</sup> He wrote a letter in which he referred to the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church as “Hagar in the Wilderness”, and he delivered lectures at Monteagle, Tenn., Chatauqua, New York, and at many other places. The type of fame which he achieved may be guessed from the fact that he was dubbed a “pragmatic philanthropist” and that he was charged with “pandering to the rich in New York for the sake of money”. These were the words of his brethren in the ministry of his own church.

One of the last editorials written by Dr. Galloway before his elevation to the Episcopacy was on the subject of the Negro in the South. He quoted the pronouncements of the Church on the Negro question and he recited statistics indicating their progress, but the hopefulness of his utterances was tinged with sorrow, because, as he said, passion against the partisan

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7 *The Christian Advocate*, New Orleans, April 2, 1885.

oppressor had kindled a prejudice against the Negro, and that as a consequence panegyrics had given place to philippics.<sup>8</sup> For his sympathy and defence of the Negro, Bishop Galloway was maligned and misrepresented to the day of his death. Dr. O. P. Fitzgerald, editor of the Nashville *Christian Advocate*, declared that the social relation of the Negro "presents a question and creates a situation so peculiar that it has no parallel in the history of the world."<sup>9</sup>

Thus through the heroic devotion of great and unselfish leaders, we have gotten forward ourselves and we have made permanent and worthy contribution to the fortunes of the Negro race in the South. There are many things of which we may be ashamed, but we have labored and prayed for a constructive and a Christian solution of the most difficult problem that ever confronted a people.

A last particular indicating the progress of the Church was the renewal of Methodist interest in higher education. The greater number of the institutions of the Church, South, which have continued to the present time, were founded either before the separation, or between that time and the beginning of the Civil War. Of the latter class, Wofford College, Spartanburg, South Carolina, was chartered December 6, 1851, and opened for work August 1, 1854. Central College, Fayette, Missouri, secured its charter of incorporation in 1855 and opened for students in 1857. Southern University, Greensboro, Alabama, was chartered in 1856 and began work in 1859. In May 1918, it was merged with Birmingham College, Birmingham, Alabama, under the name, Birmingham-Southern. Whitworth College, Brookhaven, Mississippi, opened for students in 1858, but was not incorporated until 1870.

During the period covered by this chapter, there was

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, April 8, 1886.

<sup>9</sup> *The Christian Advocate*, Nashville, March 28, 1889.

almost continuous discussion of the educational responsibility of Southern Methodism. The first result of the general discussion was a short-sighted promotion of institutions for which there was neither a demand nor the prospect of sufficient support, a situation made possible by the absence of any rule or regulation of the Church for the control of such matters. Such ventures failed, but by that process of trial and error, the Church was able to make its way forward in a time of financial difficulty and educational poverty. The leadership in the new educational enthusiasm of the Methodists was supplied by the ministers, of whom Dr. W. P. Harrison said, it was the Methodist minister who created the demand for the school and the schoolmaster, and, "To no class of men is American civilization more indebted than to the itinerant Methodist preachers. They have been to a large extent the educators of the people. It is due to the truth of history to declare that the American pulpit has laid the foundation and constructed in large degree the edifice of civilization on this continent."<sup>10</sup> Dr. Warren A. Candler, then president of Emory College and afterward Bishop, gave at this time an inspiring account of the progress of the South, and of how that section had risen to its sublime responsibility, largely through church influence and leadership. The address was delivered before the National Educational Association, at Nashville, Tennessee, August 1, 1889; and it sets forth the limitations under which the South made its progress, as well as a thrilling story of achievement.<sup>11</sup>

The outstanding educational undertaking of the years following the war was Vanderbilt University, located at Nashville, Tennessee. It is commonly accepted as fact that the beginning of the movement which resulted in the establishment of Vanderbilt University

<sup>10</sup> See Introduction, *Life of Bishop Paine*, Rivers.

<sup>11</sup> *The Christian Advocate*, Nashville, August 1, 1889.

was the assembling of a group of Methodists in what has since become known as the "Memphis Convention," on January 24-27, 1872. It is also accepted as fact that the Memphis Convention was without legal status or sanction. But the matter which was brought to a focus in the Memphis Convention had its origin in plans and action which antedated the Civil War, and that phase of the history has been largely overlooked. In 1858, Bishop Soule and Dr. A. L. P. Green secured from the Legislature of the State of Tennessee a provisional charter of incorporation for Central Southern University. The charter dated January 7, 1858, was granted to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and it was laid before that body at its meeting in May of the same year. The Conference declined to accept it, but recommended that the Tennessee and surrounding Annual Conferences do the very thing that was done by the Memphis Convention.<sup>12</sup> In the very nature of the case, the plan recommended could not be completed until after the war. In that sense, the Memphis Convention was authorized. As a matter of fact, Dr. A. L. P. Green laid before the Convention the very charter which he had presented to the General Conference of 1858. The editorial agitation by Dr. W. C. Johnson in the *Western Methodist* in the summer of 1871, the action of the Tennessee Conference at Lebanon, Tennessee, in October following, and the appointment of Drs. A. L. P. Green, R. A. Young, and D. C. Kelly to visit and enlist the surrounding Conferences were in exact compliance with the resolution adopted by the General Conference of 1858.<sup>13</sup>

A convention for the purpose of promoting a University, met at Memphis, January 24-27, 1872. The convention adopted a series of resolutions which came to be known as the "Memphis Convention Resolutions",

<sup>12</sup> *Journal of The General Conference*, 1858, pp. 450, 523, 569, 570.

<sup>13</sup> *The Christian Advocate*, Nashville, June 28; Oct. 11; 18,, 1890.



and pursuant to the instruction of the Convention, a charter for Central University was secured, August 6, 1872. That charter incorporated the Memphis Convention Resolutions in full as a part of its provisions. Before anything further was accomplished, however, Bishop McTyeire went to New York for medical or surgical care and while there he was the guest of Commodore Vanderbilt whose wife was a cousin of the wife of Bishop McTyeire. In the interchange of conversation, Bishop McTyeire outlined to Commodore Vanderbilt his dream of a University for the South, whereupon Mr. Vanderbilt made an offer through Bishop McTyeire, under date of March 17, 1873, to provide the funds for the University, according to the stipulations of the Resolutions of the Memphis Convention. On June 16, following, an amendment to the charter was secured changing the name to Vanderbilt University, and, for some unexplained reason, the Memphis Convention Resolutions were eliminated from the charter. While Bishop McTyeire lived, there appears to have been no objection raised either as to the authority of the Church or to its regulative action. There may have been an undercurrent of resistance, but a letter from J. T. McGill shows that, after the death of Bishop McTyeire, dissent became vocal and there was a rift between the control and the alumni. An instance of its earliest expression was a refusal to endorse the election of Bishop Hargrove who had been named the successor to Bishop McTyeire as president of the Board of Trust. The vote of the alumni meeting was twenty to twelve, and the complaints alleged that the management was "Sectarian" and "narrow" and that the faculty ignored the alumni. From June 16, 1873, to the time when it was alienated, partly by a decision of the courts of Tennessee and partly by abandonment of the Church, Vanderbilt University was the chief educational institution of

the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In his will, Bishop McTyeire referred to it as "her largest and richest institution", and of his wife as a "golden link in the chain that holds Vanderbilt University to the South, and to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South." He says that Commodore Vanderbilt made "the Methodist Church his almoner to the world." Mr. Vanderbilt was silent on the subject of the ownership of the Church, but his very silence can only imply that he perfectly understood and accepted the facts which Bishop McTyeire afterward recited in his will.

Other schools established about this time were: Grenada College, Grenada, Mississippi, originated as Yalobusha Baptist Female College, but chartered as Grenada Collegiate Institute in 1884. The Methodists operated it from 1882. Hendrix College, Conway, Arkansas, was chartered as Central Collegiate Institute in 1884. Its original location was Altus, Arkansas, but it was moved to Conway in 1889. Next, and one of the staunchest of the more recent Colleges, was Millsaps College, Jackson, Mississippi. Its charter of incorporation bears the date of February 21, 1890, and it was opened for students on September 29, 1892. Scarritt Bible and Training School, Kansas City, Missouri, began in 1892. It was removed to Nashville, Tennessee, in 1924 and its name was changed to Scarritt College. Southern Methodist University, located at Dallas, Texas, was chartered in 1911 and began work in 1915.

Southern Methodist University, though one of the very latest educational enterprises to be launched by the Church, is already a great institution and it represents in a worthy manner that vast section of Methodism. It was chartered in 1911, and the first session opened in 1915; but in less than twenty-five years it presents an imposing appearance. It has a splendid clientele, an excellent faculty and a large student body.

The very arrangement of the campus and every building reveals the greatness of the mind and heart of the Methodism back of it. It is not the gift of any one distinguished patron, it is rather a creature of the Methodism of the entire West. It is not the most wealthy university of the Church, but one can easily believe that the day is not far distant when it will be considered the most potent educational influence of the Southwest.

Deaths at the close of this period include Dr. John B. McFerrin, who was one of the ablest administrators and one of the most widely used connectional servants of the Church. His death occurred May 9, 1887. William Murrah, who died at his home in Pickens County, Alabama, October 9, 1887, was another of the survivors of 1844. Last was Bishop Holland N. McTyeire, February 15, 1889. As a preacher he was not popular as that term is ordinarily employed, but he was a man of profound thought and felicitous expression, and he spoke with monosyllabic directness. He was probably the last inheritor of the affection and the administrative authority which descended from Bishop Soule. His thought was severe in its depth and dignity, but he was a man of great tenderness of heart, and in administration he was uniformly courteous and kind. With the going of Bishop McTyeire, the Southern Church passed the summit of what might be styled the Asburyan era of its history, and from that point onward its administration has been more democratic and liberal.

Methodist influence at this time was more extended than the organizations bearing the name. According to an old copy of *The Methodist*, New York, there was an extensive group of non-Methodist churches "Within the range of a mile north and south, and between Fourth and Fifth Avenues" in New York City that had secured pastors from the Methodist ministry. The de-

nominations were Episcopal, Baptist, Presbyterian, Unitarian, Congregational, and Independent. The pastors named were Doctors Watkins, Armitage, Vincent, Collyer, Davis, Lloyd, Rylance, and Deems. It is a remarkable evidence of the ability and the character of the Methodist ministry that so large a contingent of the pastors of other denominations in the very heart of metropolitan New York should have been trained and disciplined by the followers of Mr. Wesley. It is certain that New York never had a sounder or a more evangelistic corps of pastors than were those drawn from the ranks of the Methodists.



## CHAPTER XIII

### CASTING ANCHOR

AT THIS point in the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, there was a decided change in the emphasis of its thought and interest. There was a manifest quickening of the sense of moral and spiritual values, there were beginnings of ecclesiastical comity and understanding between ourselves and others sharing with us the faith and the field, and there began an ecclesiastical tightening of control in our own affairs. The history of Methodism in America since 1844 had been too much colored by the bitter feelings of that lamentable contest. Feelings of retaliation were succeeded by an attitude of resistance in the interest of self-preservation and even of an exclusive occupancy of the field. The fraternal exchanges between North and South were, however, gradually softening the feelings on both sides with the resultant lessening of sectional asperities. There was not an immediate abandonment of the distrust of the past, but the way was being cleared for the development of a denominational friendship and comity which would ultimately bring about a new Methodism North and South.

The removal of the tension toward the North had, as one of its earliest results, the development in the South of a new ecclesiastical censorship of itself. The interest of the Church, South, became centered upon its own internal problems. There came about, therefore, a closer censorship of its own activities and a

more rigid control of those whose independence might border upon insubordination. There began at this time a diversification of interest at the South which had the effect of broadening the thought of the people along social and economic lines, and that in turn resulted in a deepening of the sense of responsibility for those thrust into new relations and new vocations. All in all, it was the period when the protocol signed by the Cape May Commission became a fact in the life of the Church.

The General Conference of 1890 met in Centenary Church, St. Louis, on May 7. One of the first matters to receive consideration was a communication from the Protestant Episcopal Church proposing organic union among all Protestant churches. The Committee on Fraternal Correspondence, in a rather unfraternal report, said that it would regard such as an evil course and the report was unanimously adopted. The particularly interesting phase of the incident was that the report was reconsidered and after being debated at length was re-adopted.<sup>1</sup> Another incident of somewhat similar tone was the response of Bishop Keener to the fraternal message of Dr. Frank M. Bristol of the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>2</sup> One cannot but feel now that the effect of such an utterance by a leader of the Church was unfortunate both for the South and for the interests of Methodism at large. It was at this Conference that the matter of the union of the Methodisms of Japan was brought forward, but the adoption of such a policy, not being recommended by the Bishops, was postponed until such a time as the Japanese might have some training in Methodist procedure through the working of an Annual Conference.<sup>3</sup>

The shift of the emphasis to the ethical and the

1 *Journal of the General Conference*, 1890, pp. 133, 134, 172-174.

2 *Ibid.*, Appendix, p. 300.

3 *Ibid.*, pp., 33, 179.





CHAPEL OF DUKE UNIVERSITY



moral was registered again and again in the proceedings of the Conference. It was expressed in the deprecation of the use of such terms as "the reformed theater" and the "legitimate drama", and it was recorded in the Episcopal Address, in the Report of the Committee of Fifteen on the Spiritual State, and in Resolutions from the floor. One resolution branded the Louisiana Lottery as a "national disgrace", and throughout the session there was an insistence upon a standard of conduct and a propriety of attitude worthy of the Church and of the Gospel.

Early in the session, Bishop Keener ruled that laymen were not eligible to sit on the Committee on Appeals and the Committee on Episcopacy, on the ground that those committees had to do with ministerial character. An appeal was taken from the ruling, but it was withdrawn and later a resolution was adopted which declared it to be the sense of the Conference that laymen were eligible for membership on all committees.<sup>4</sup> At the succeeding General Conference in 1894, the same question was raised again when the Committee on Revisals proposed a change in the Chapter on Administration of the Discipline by which laymen were made eligible for all trial committees. Bishop Keener again stood in the breach and announced the veto, by the Bishops, of that part of the Report.<sup>5</sup>

Another change made in the Discipline was important in view of an incident which occurred later in the year. Cases of failure or refusal to attend the work assigned by the Bishop had been tried in open session of the Annual Conference, but action was passed which made such cases triable by a committee, as in cases of immorality. Soon after the adjournment of the General Conference, Dr. D. C. Kelly left his charge at Gallatin, Tennessee, to make the race for Governor as

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45, 62.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 1894, pp. 235, 236.

the nominee of the Prohibition party. When the Tennessee Conference met Dr. Kelly's character was arrested and, instead of meeting the issue squarely, he and his friend resorted to technicalities and they undertook to force a trial on the floor of the Conference rather than before a committee as the new law required. Of this effort, Dr. Hoss said editorially in the *Christian Advocate*, that they sought to outgeneral the Church rather than to answer the issue as stated by Bishop Keener.<sup>6</sup> Except in permitting the Conference to reject the report of the first committee which found a trial necessary, the conduct of the case by Bishop Hargrove appears to have been entirely regular. Dr. Kelly and his advisers were not wise in the management of the case, and the Doctor was suspended for a period of six months.

Two other matters showed the constructive thinking of the Conference. The first was the creation of a Board of Trustees to hold lands, personal estates, or funds bequeathed as legacies. This Board was to be composed of eight members, four clerical and four lay members.<sup>7</sup> The second was the creation of a Board of Education which, unfortunately for the Church and for the cause of education, was later in the session reconsidered and defeated.<sup>8</sup> This failure of the General Conference to set up machinery to direct the coverage of the field proved to be a serious handicap to educational progress, for it was in effect an abandonment of the Church to a haphazard policy which caused much embarrassment in later years. Two deaths occurred in the membership of the Conference during its sitting. Rev. Nathan Scarritt of Missouri died on May 22, and Rev. J. E. Mann of North Carolina died two days later. The Conference adjourned *sine die* on May 26.

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<sup>6</sup> *The Christian Advocate*, Nashville, Nov. 15, 1890; Nov. 29, 1890.

<sup>7</sup> *Journal of the General Conference*, 1890, pp. 245, 251.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 100, 186, 197, 198.

On July 9, 1890, occurred the death of General Clinton B. Fisk, who had been one of the fraternal messengers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1874, and who had spoken without commission in 1886. No man at the North was more sincerely beloved by the South than was General Fisk and his death was widely mourned throughout Southern Methodism. Deaths in the ranks of the South included Rev. J. W. Lambuth, the veteran missionary to China and Japan, who died April 28, 1892. His dying message was, "I fall at my post. Send more men." Honorable L. Q. C. Lamar, one of the Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, died suddenly at Macon, Georgia, January 23, 1893, and Major Ethelbert Barksdale died at Jackson, Mississippi, February 16, 1893. These were two of the most eminent political leaders of the South and both were Methodist laymen. Justice Lamar joined the Methodist Church when a student at Emory College, but grew cold and dropped out until a few years before his death. Major Barksdale was a devoted friend of Bishop Galloway and it was he who wrote the beautiful and tender death notice of Rev. Charles B. Galloway who was reported to have died of yellow fever at Vicksburg in 1878. At the bier of the fallen statesman, Bishop Galloway with golden voice paid the tribute of a golden heart to his devoted friend.

The second Ecumenical Conference of Methodists met in Washington D. C., October 7-10, 1891. In addition to the consideration of distinctively Methodist interests and affairs, the program brought forward subjects of a more general nature: The Unity and the Catholicity of the Christian Church; The Church and Scientific Thought; The Church and Her Agencies; Education; Romanism; Temperance; Social Problems; Missions; War and Peace; Public Morality; and The Outlook. As we have already stated, the first Con-

ference promoted the early Methodist emphasis upon the doctrine of holiness. The Second Conference took a wider sweep and under the leadership of the saintly William Arthur and Hugh Price Hughes, it probably gave the initial urge to the unification sentiment which is now well on the way to a binding into one of the dismembered fragments of Methodism, and which even offers promise for a reintegration of the ranks of Christendom itself.

The educational legislation which failed of adoption as a connectional movement did not result in the collapse of the cause. There was launched through the Sunday schools a somewhat crude educational work which, nevertheless, did great service in the promotion of moral practices and social ideals that were vital to the life and progress of the Church. This modest beginning became a pioneer movement through which has been developed a worthy and a well-coordinated educational program for the whole Church.

The territory of the Southern Church was again invaded by the great River. In May and June of 1893, Mississippi and Arkansas suffered from inundation, but the damage was not nearly so great as had been the case a few years before. A symptomatic event of 1894 was the march of the unemployed upon Washington. The marchers were popularly known as Coxey's Army, the movement was indicative of a condition which was developing in the life of the nation, and it was the forerunner of a wide-spread industrial unrest which was then just beginning. The demonstration was generally regarded as a chimerical scheme of industrial fanatics and it was mercilessly caricatured in the public press, but such clamors have persisted through the years and the press and the public alike have come to regard the appeals as having more of justice and reason in them than they knew.



The General Conference met in Memphis, May 3-21, 1894. The first three days of the session were largely taken up with parliamentary wrangling, and the entire Conference was marked by petty quibbling and unimportant points of order. The volume of new and constructive measures was not great, but a few things were of far reaching importance. Among the epoch-making enactments were the creation of a Board of Education and the authorization of a Commission on Federation to act jointly with similar commissions of other Methodist bodies. The Board of Education was set up, but the Conference refused to enact a law for the standardization of the educational work of the Church. The Commission on Federation was to be composed of three Bishops, three clerical and three lay members. In that initial step was inaugurated the movement which has done more to create a better understanding between North and South, than any step since 1844 and it now gives promise of the consummation of a union of the great Methodist bodies throughout the nation.

At this Conference a step was taken which appears to have been meant to correct some of the abuses in the licensing, recommendation and supervision of local ministers. The whole matter was transferred from the quarterly to the District Conference. The change was stubbornly resisted but the law was enacted. It is likely that the change did not perfectly restrain those who were disposed to be indulgent and easy with ministerial applicants, but it unquestionably served to raise the standard of efficiency in the local ranks. At least, the same regulation has been continued for forty years with very little modification except an increased educational requirement.

The development of the work among the Young People of the church was given shape and direction in the

establishment of an Epworth League Board of which Dr. S. A. Steel was elected Secretary. Another evidence of the growing social conscience of the church was the tightening of the Temperance regulations. Members were prohibited from engaging in the sale of liquors and also from signing liquor petitions in behalf of others desiring to engage in the business. The membership of the General Conference was becoming too large for ease of entertainment and facility in the transaction of business. The ratio of representation was, therefore, changed from one to every thirty-six to one for every forty-eight members of the Annual Conference. The proposal for a united Methodist Church of Japan was again deferred, and the rise of a troublesome and an unauthorized type of religious periodical received notice in a resolution which recommended that the circulation of papers calculated to interfere with the General and Conference organs be discouraged. An unhappy incident was the attack upon the official character of Bishop Hargrove. The Committee on Episcopacy held that the charges were not supported by sufficient evidence and his character was passed, but a protest was filed against the action of the Committee.<sup>9</sup>

Another measure, which failed to get the approval of the Conference, shows something of the difficulties in the way of race adjustment and particularly of race cooperation in the South. A measure was introduced which sought to create a fund, in conjunction with Bishops Lane and Holsey of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, to assist in the better educational preparation of the ministers of that Church. The measure was defeated, but the Conference did authorize an appropriation to Paine and Lane Institutes, despite an outspoken opposition.

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9 *Ibid.*, 1894, pp., 225, 226.

The year 1895 marked what might be called the central period of the controversy over the second-blessing theory of sanctification in the South. The doctrine of holiness was not new to Methodist thinking, but the peculiar belief that sanctification might be instantaneously attained by a separate and distinct work of grace was not generally accepted by the Southern Church. Those who professed the experience of entire sanctification appealed to Mr. Wesley and they claimed for the belief the sanction of Scripture; but the doctrine embodied an extreme view of holiness for which the rank and file of the Church were not prepared, and the movement enlisted, as such movements always do, many of an extreme type and some also whose lives were a poor credential for the large claims that were made. The effect of the aggressive campaign that was waged was to introduce confusion into many churches and it resulted in an unfortunate division in not a few communities. Bishops Keener and Granbery discussed the subject through the church press, and the growing discord caused a tightening of the control respecting a troublesome minority. As a result of the repression, some ministers and many members withdrew from the Church and formed local groups which either went to other denominations or joined in forming new sects which gave special recognition and emphasis to their peculiar belief. There are still many people in the Church, South, who believe very sincerely in a distinct and a conscious separation unto a holy life, but the militant attitude no longer exists either for or against the movement.

A controversy closely associated with the sanctification agitation had its beginning at this time also. It was the controversy over the critical interpretation of the Scriptures, commonly referred to as "Higher Criticism." The situation which developed is well illus-

trated by a statement made by Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler, who said: "No gales of any so-called higher criticism have ever blown high enough to ruffle a single feather of my faith in the perfect inspiration, the perfect infallibility, and the perfect authority of the only Bible which our heavenly Father has given to his children."<sup>10</sup> Those confident words were not sufficient, however, to stem the tide of criticism which beat upon certain prevailing and commonly accepted interpretations of Scripture. In the long controversy which followed, no side was able to win a decisive victory, but Southern Methodism kept well to the conservative side in its view of matters which it considered to be fundamental and vital. But in spite of its tenacious adherence to a middle course, there has been a considerable change in the position of the Church on many of the questions raised by the critics.

Still another contest incidentally related to the sanctification movement, had to do with the evangelists who became prominent in that crusade. Some of the evangelists contributed not a little to the difficulties growing out of the holiness contest. Primarily the difficulty resulted from the failure to anticipate the need for such a ministry in the Church, and the consequent lack of legislation to recognize and regulate the labors of such ministers. The contest forced many worthy and useful ministers out of the itinerant ranks, and even in the local ranks they were somewhat outlawed. Among those driven out of the traveling connection were Rev. Sam P. Jones of Georgia, Dr. H. C. Morrison of Kentucky, and others. Some were haled before church tribunals and upon trial, were sentenced to suspension as disturbers of the ecclesiastical peace. It was the old story of failing to judge the significance of a movement when its effectiveness might have been con-

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<sup>10</sup> *Christian Advocate*, New Orleans, April 30, 1896.



served. The Methodist Episcopal Church took the lead in the recognition and the regulation of the evangelists, and the Church, South, in order to protect itself against an unregulated evangelism, also found it necessary to recognize the office. But the belated recognition crippled the spirit and lessened the effectiveness of good men, and made possible a degree of exploitation of the evangelistic calling which brought to the entire movement a measure of disrepute. But notwithstanding the difficulties, the evangelists have done a great and worthy work for the Church.

The care of orphan children in America probably dated from the establishment of Whitefield's Orphans House in Georgia, but the practical application of that form of philanthropy had to wait until the closing years of the nineteenth century for its opportunity. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, now owns and operates fourteen institutions for the care of orphan children. The first orphanage established was in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1865, and closely following that two institutions were established in Georgia, the first at Decatur in 1869 and the second at Macon in 1872. Following that it was more than twenty years before another orphanage was established by the Church. During the period covered by this chapter, six orphanages began operation and in the next decade five more were established. In every distinctly Southern state, except Florida, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has an orphanage. In those institutions, according to the report of 1934-1935, 2,663 children were being cared for and educated. The properties held for this work are valued at \$6,067,699, they have a total endowment of \$1,130,963, and the annual expenditure for support is \$608,926. In addition to the outlay for maintenance, the various institutions own and operate 7,904 acres of farm land by which the orphanages are in part sup-

ported, and the children are trained in various forms of industry, ways of self-support.<sup>11</sup>

An interesting study of this period relates to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Negro. Statistics on that subject are not quite so reassuring as in some other lines of activity and progress. The most that was being done at this time for the Negro by the Southern Methodist Church was expressed through poorly executed plans for the support of Paine and Lane Institutes at Augusta, Georgia, and at Jackson, Tennessee. Certainly the meager contributions to these two institutions do not justify the large claims sometimes made concerning the interest of the Southern Methodist Church in the advancement of the Negro race. Paine Institute was organized in 1882 and, including the gift of Rev. Moses U. Paine, the net total raised and applied to Paine Institute was \$83,906.66, and the raising of that sum was spread over a period of fourteen years.<sup>12</sup> It is needless to say that there is little ground for a spirit of boasting in that achievement. It is sometimes pointed out that the Negro was a large participant in tax supported education. That, of course, is true, but his participation was never a normal share as measured by his need or his numbers. But, aside from the question of equities, it is unreasonable and unfair to assess Negro participation in the public schools as a philanthropy of the South, and certainly it was not something for which the Methodism of the South might claim credit.

Two deaths during this period were of more than passing significance to the Church, South. The first was the death of Bishop Atticus G. Haygood, at Oxford, Georgia, January 19, 1896. The other was the death of Miss Frances E. Willard, February 19, 1898. Miss Willard's superb leadership in the fight for

11 *Yearbook, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1934-1935*

12 *The Christian Advocate, New Orleans, February 4, 1897*

Temperance won for her many devoted friends in the South. She was probably without an equal as a Temperance leader, and she was the most widely known and the best beloved woman in the world.

The organization of the newly launched work in behalf of the Young People furnished occasion for a censorship on the part of the conservative elements in the Church, which resulted in some regrettable incidents. In the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Dr. S. A. Steel, the Secretary of the Epworth League Board, was called before a committee of investigation on charges against his administration. Dr. Steel gave assurance that the offence would not be repeated and the charges were dropped. Dr. E. S. Schell, a Young People's worker of the Indiana Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, was investigated upon similar charges brought by *Zion's Herald*. The Indiana Conference exonerated Dr. Schell and proposed, as an addition, that the Wesleyan Association, the owners, review the editorial management of *Zion's Herald*.<sup>13</sup>

The General Conference met in Baltimore, May 5 to 23, 1898. One of the first things to receive consideration was the request of Bishop John C. Keener for retirement from active service in the episcopacy. Although he was old and infirm, the request for retirement gave pause to the Conference. Bishop Keener was the last important link with the years of conflict and struggle through which the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, passed during the years following the separation. After his retirement, Bishop Keener spent the remaining days of his life in New Orleans, which had been his home for many years. He died on January 19, 1906, lacking less than a month of being eighty-seven years of age.

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, August 13, 20, 1896; September 21, 1899.

Two Commissions raised by the preceding General Conference made report. The first was charged with the correction of the text of the Articles of Religion. It appears that some corruptions in the text, as prepared by Mr. Wesley, had occurred and it was desired to restore the Articles to their original form. The report of the Commission and the changes suggested were adopted. The Commission on Federation with other Methodist bodies made report of progress, and it was continued for another quadrennium. At this time, the old question of a more clearly defined Constitution for the Church was urged and a Commission was raised to report at the succeeding General Conference. The report of the Commission was made in 1902, action on it was postponed, the Commission was continued for another four years, and that seems to have been the end of it since no further mention of it is to be found in the Journal of the General Conference.

The mood of the Conference was somewhat subdued by events of international interest. The death of Hon. William E. Gladstone, the great English commoner, occurred during the session. In a political sense he belonged to England, but as a world-renowned Christian statesman, he belonged to all lands. He was probably the best known and the most universally beloved man in public life at that time. A more immediate and oppressive circumstance was the impending conflict with Spain on account of conditions prevailing in the Island of Cuba. Resolutions were passed commending President McKinley for his efforts to avoid a war with Spain, but the war came. Admiral Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay, and the American squadron under Admirals Sampson and Schley completely annihilated Admiral Cervera's fleet at the battle of Santiago. A protocol was signed on August 12, 1898, which granted freedom to Cuba, and the Philip-



pine Islands were ceded later to the United States. Thus came to an end the insularity to which the United States had vainly clung. Step by step our dominions were extended until we came at last to face the territorial expanse and responsibility of a world power.

The internal conflicts of the Church were reflected in certain corrective measures which were adopted. There seems to have arisen a rather troublesome and offensive practice, on the part of the press, of making nominations for official positions in the Church, for which elections were pending. A first effort to curb the practice failed of adoption, but later the resolution was re-introduced and passed.<sup>14</sup> The contest with the evangelists was brought forward in the form of a measure for curbing the freedom of their movements. The Discipline was so revised as to require the evangelist to secure the consent of the pastor before he might enter the bounds of a pastoral charge. Fourteen members of the Conference registered their disapproval of the action by a protest, and a reply to the protest was made by order of the Conference.<sup>15</sup>

A very important matter was the memorial from the Board of Trust of Vanderbilt University asking changes designed to make the University "entirely connectional and relate it directly to the whole Church." In view of later events, one cannot help being impressed by a careful distinction of authority in the phraseology of the memorial: "By the charter of the University, the Board of Trust is vested with the power and obligation to fill its own vacancies; but the election of any member is not valid under the law of the University until said member has been confirmed by the Conference which he is designed to represent."<sup>16</sup> It is, of course, possible that this distinction was un-

<sup>14</sup> *Journal of the General Conference*, M. E. Church, South, 1898, pp. 102, 113.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 176-179, 195.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 197, 198.

intentional, but it is part of a carefully worded memorial.

The most important action of the Conference was the authorization given the Board of Education for raising a fund of \$1,500,000 for the support of the educational work of the Church. The movement was called the Twentieth Century Educational Fund, and the Conference directed that the campaign should begin not later than January 1, 1899, and be completed by January 1, 1901, but the canvass to be continued until the whole amount should be raised. The contributions were to be in cash or in legal notes payable within five years.<sup>17</sup> The campaign was well organized and was pressed with vigor in all parts of the connection. The Secretary of the Board of Education reported to the General Conference of 1902, that \$2,040,948.17 had been subscribed and that \$1,420,511.86 had been paid in.<sup>18</sup> The collection of such a large sum for educational purposes was a real achievement for that day, and it gave a new impetus to the educational program of the Church.

A special feature of the Conference was the hour set aside for the celebration of the "jubilee" of the founding of the China mission. The address of the occasion was delivered by Dr. Young J. Allen whose long and intimate knowledge of China enabled him to command the interest of the Church almost to the extent of commandeering its resources. Action was passed by the Conference to establish a Publishing House in Shanghai and \$50,000 was allotted for that purpose. Later it was made a joint enterprise of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

The General Conference of 1898 concluded its work

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 218-220.

<sup>18</sup> *The Christian Advocate*, New Orleans, June 26, 1902.

in a state of unseemly impatience which too often spoils the closing hours of a deliberative body. On that account, much legislation is enacted without due consideration. Often worthy and even much needed measures are refused consideration. Certainly the frequent motions to "table" and the motion, renewed again and again, to adjourn *sine die*, are not altogether creditable. The saving fact in vital legislation enacted amid such confusion is its careful preparation before being introduced and sent to the calendar, and the knowledge that such is true may be an explanation of the willingness to act in such haste.

The next four years in the history of the Church were largely occupied with a controversy which was both bitter and unfortunate. It was the famous War Claim settlement which grew out of the occupancy of and the damage done to the Publishing House under a military order issued by General G. H. Thomas, during the occupation of Nashville by Federal troops. The order was a matter of record in the War Department and the facts were not disputed, but the Church tried in vain for twenty-five years to get a settlement of the claim. After various representatives had been unsuccessful in their efforts, the Book Agents employed Major E. B. Stahlman, a lawyer of Nashville, to handle the claim. Under a contract signed in July, 1895, he was to receive for his services thirty-five per cent of the sum collected. Major Stahlman finally secured the passage of a bill to pay the Church \$288,000 in full settlement of the claim. The bill passed the Senate on March 8, and was approved by the President on March 11, 1898; but in the course of the debate in the Senate a persistent report was circulated as to the large fee of Major Stahlman. On March 5, Senator Pasco, of Florida, wrote the Book Agents to know if Major Stahlman were to receive forty per cent for his serv-

ices. On March 7, the Agents replied by telegram: "Letter 5th received. The statement is untrue, and you are hereby authorized to deny it." In a short time, it became known that the fee paid was thirty-five per cent of the settlement, and a committee of investigation was appointed by the Senate. The committee reported on July 8, 1898, exonerating the Church from blame, but censuring the "Book Agents" for injuring the Church by their "misconduct."<sup>19</sup> The Senate investigation and the charge against the Book Agents caused much agitation and there was a wide-spread movement to have the money returned to the government. Four days before the report of the Senate investigating committee, the Bishops addressed a communication to the Senate, saying, "That if the Senate, by affirmative action, declares that the passage of the bill was due to misleading statement, we will take proper steps to have the entire amount returned to the government." No such action was taken, but seventy-nine of the eighty-eight Senators signed a paper reaffirming the exoneration contained in the committee's report of July 8.

The agitation continued throughout the quadrennium and when the General Conference met in 1902, a tenseness of feeling and the greatest uncertainty prevailed on both sides. The two factions were about evenly divided, petitions and resolutions had been sent up from eight Annual Conferences, and a number of efforts were made to force the discussion on the floor of the Conference at an early moment. The Committee on Publishing Interests, however, wisely waited for an abatement of the feeling before bringing in their report. After a long and heated discussion, a substitute report was adopted by a vote of about 150 to 100. The substitute approved the course of the Bishops and their

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<sup>19</sup> *The Congressional Record*, Second Session, Fifty-fifth Congress.



offer to return the money upon the request of the Senate, but disclaimed all misstatements by the attorney or the Book Agents.<sup>20</sup> With the adoption of that substitute, the War Claim controversy was brought to an end, but every prospect for the passage of constructive and needed legislation had been defeated.

A development of the closing years of the nineteenth century, which affected the Church, was a feeling over the labor question. It was not directly related to the work of the church, but the sensitiveness was reflected in the life of local communities, and it found expression in the church press. The agitation created quite a problem for churches in industrial communities. At Water Valley, Mississippi, Rev. H. P. Gibbs, the pastor of the Methodist Church, was publishing a series of articles in the *Methodist Headlight* on "The Factory and Its People." The Yocona Mills of that town took offence at the articles and secured a temporary injunction restraining their publication. Very naturally the feeling became bitter and a rift was created in the church and community. The injunction was later dissolved, but not until a personal assault upon the pastor had made permanent the lines of division.<sup>21</sup> A flare of this same feeling occurred at the General Conference of 1902, over a proposed commission to arbitrate differences between capital and labor, when such arbitration should be requested by both sides. The resolution was defeated after a rather acrimonious discussion.

At this period, the discussion of the question of laity rights for women became a real issue in the church. The Methodist Episcopal Church, after a very decided laity vote which had no legal status, came to grips with the question at the General Conference in 1892. The Judiciary Committee decided against the eligibility of

<sup>20</sup> *Journal of the General Conference*, M. E. Church, South, 1902, pp. 140, 154, 220.

<sup>21</sup> *The Christian Advocate*, New Orleans, October 5, 1899.

women as delegates of the General Conference. The action taken on the submission of a proposal for a change in the constitution was toward the close of the session, it was not a clear and consistent statement of the proposal and it resulted in another quadrennium of confused and ineffectual discussion. The General Conference of 1896 sent down the amendment in regular form and it was adopted.<sup>22</sup> The authority for the admission of women to membership in the Conferences of the Church, South, was delayed until the General Conference of 1918, and the ratification by the Annual Conference in the quadrennium which followed. The first contingent of women delegates appeared and was seated at the General Conference of 1922, which met in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Other important changes in the law of the Methodist Episcopal Church were made in 1900. They were: the introduction of equal lay representation in the General Conference; the removal of the time limit from the pastorate; investing the missionary Bishops with co-ordinate authority in their respective fields; the discontinuance of a number of periodicals; and retrenchment in the subsidies of still others.<sup>23</sup>

The year 1900 was made memorable in the history of the Church by the serious disturbances in China, known as the Boxer uprisings. For weeks all foreigners in the disturbed areas were imperiled by the rioters, and they were cut off from all communication with their home countries. The Ministers and legations in Peking, representing the United States, Great Britain, Germany, France, Russia, Italy, Austria, Japan, and Belgium, and seven hundred missionaries and teachers were imperiled. Unfounded rumors of wholesale massacre caused great excitement and the world was in a

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<sup>22</sup> *A History of Methodism in the United States*, Buckley, Vol. II., pp. 279-284.

<sup>23</sup> *The Christian Advocate*, Nashville, May 31, 1900.

state of great strain.<sup>24</sup> The heroic and resolute defence of the American legation by Minister E. H. Conger is a classic of those dreadful days. At last quiet was restored and indemnities for the destruction of life and property, totaling \$315,000,000, were assessed against China. The United States was awarded \$25,000,000, and Great Britain \$24,000,000; but in each case the entire sum was set aside as a fund for the education of Chinese youth in American and British universities. After the siege, Minister Conger paid beautiful and touching tribute to the patience and devotion of the missionaries, to whom he attributed a large share of the credit for saving the legation and the refugees. Strange as it may seem, the disorders which so disturbed the world had no permanent effect upon the missionary enterprise in China.

The outstanding event of 1901, in the Southern Methodist Church, was the great Missionary Conference which met in Tulane Hall, New Orleans. At that Conference, missionary enthusiasm probably reached the highest pitch in the history of the enterprise. Nowwithstanding the frenzy of fear and excitement which existed a few months before, Bishop Charles B. Galloway, following his remarkable address, raised \$50,000 for Soo Chow University, China—the largest single missionary offering ever made up to that time.

On September 4, 1901, the third session of the Ecumenical Conference of Methodism met in London. Bishop Galloway of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was the Conference preacher. The discussions of this Conference took a controversial turn which was rather unfortunate. The criticism of the British Government on account of the Boer War in South Africa was particularly ill-timed.<sup>25</sup> It probably reflected for the mo-

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, July 19, 1900.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, September 26, 1901.

ment the resistance by the Christian Church of the tendency to secularize and politicalize its life. And, no doubt, the participation of the church in the social and industrial struggle, in progress at the same time, was of the same kind.

The General Conference which met at Dallas, Texas, May 7 to 26, 1902, as has been pointed out already, was absorbed with the War Claim controversy. Despite this preemption of the thought of the Conference, some forward steps were taken. First was the approval of the recommendations of the Joint Commission on Federation for setting up a United Methodism for Japan, and the preparation of a joint edition of the hymnal and a uniform order of service for American Methodism as represented in the Commission. A second step was the movement for the creation of an Endowment Fund looking to a more adequate support for superannuate ministers and their dependents. The Conference authorized the raising of a fund of \$100,000 and a collection of \$20,000 was taken at the Conference. At the succeeding General Conference, the Secretary reported about \$91,000 in cash and \$105,000 in subscriptions and the Conference then fixed the new goal for the Superannuate Fund at \$5,000,000. At the General Conference of 1922, the Board of Finance was given the right of way for the next four years in a special effort to raise \$10,000,000 for the cause. At present the total amount of the endowment is \$6,288,441.86 for the General and the Conference Funds, with a Reserve Fund of \$43,990.30. A third step was the enactment of a law for the creation of an order of deaconesses. To the last measure, a protest was filed by Dr. Anson West of the Alabama Conference. There was also legislation looking to a more equitable distribution of the benevolent apportionments, which was protested, but on the ground that it had not had the



consideration due such a far-reaching change.<sup>26</sup> Doctors Embree E. Hoss and A. Coke Smith were elected Bishops.

It will be observed that the action and movement of the period which we have been discussing were influenced less from the outside than had been the case in any similar period since 1844. It is evident that the Church had reached a point where it realized that it must unify its interior attitudes and action if it were to hold a worthy and an influential place in the life of the people. It was a period, therefore, in which the Church was battling for the integrity of its soul, the consistency of its administration, and an orderly regulation of the factors which must determine its ultimate success. It was a time of casting anchor—a fixing of its position upon the ecclesiastical sea.

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<sup>26</sup> *Journal of the General Conference, M. E. Church, South, 1902*, pp. 161, 162, 183-189, 248, 249.



## CHAPTER XIV

### A NEW CENTURY

THE beginning of the twentieth century marked a distinct transition in Southern life and it brought a corresponding change in the problem of the Church. In the Episcopal Address of 1906, the Bishops called attention to an industrialization and an urbanizing of the South due to the manufacture of cotton goods and lumber, the development of coal and steel industries, and the beginnings of what have come to be extensive oil developments—all of which contributed to a rapid increase in population. The objectives of the Church were unchanged, but the new conditions necessarily made the problem and the outlook different from what they had been under the rural and agricultural situation of the preceding century. In addition to the changes on account of the variation in the social and industrial structure of the South, the Church faced problems which were less radical in their origin, but not less disturbing in their temporary effect upon the thought and feeling of the people.

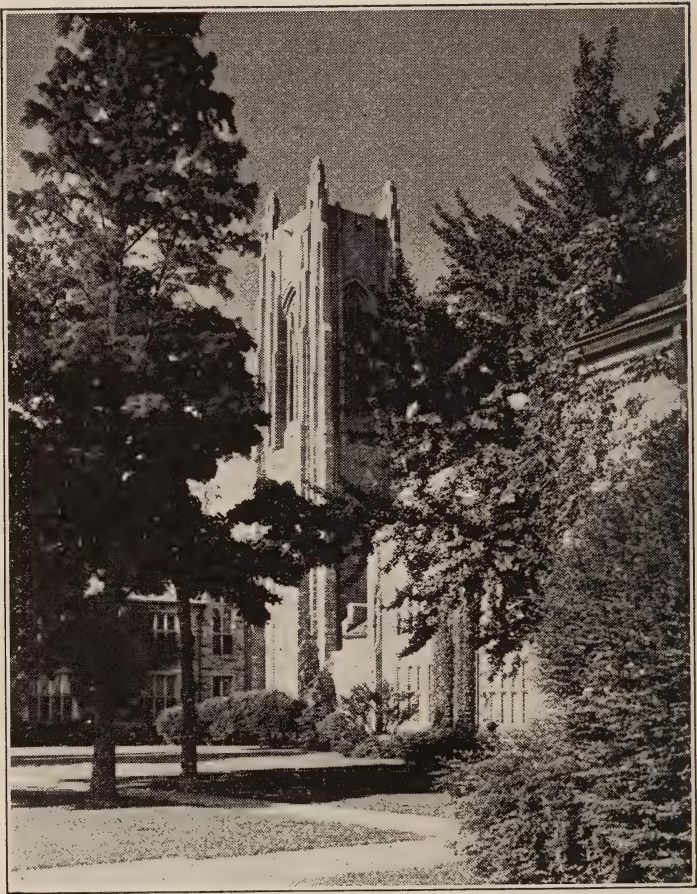
Missionary work in the Orient was greatly embarrassed by conditions prevailing in that part of the world. The outbreak and progress of the Russo-Japanese War disturbed and demoralized the situation to such an extent as to hinder greatly the movements of the people, and the economic and social relations of peoples not immediately involved in the conflict were thrown into confusion. To the embarrassments rooted

in war, was added an equally serious trouble caused by the Chinese Exclusion Act of the United States. The exclusion of Chinese emigrants by the United States was met by a boycott against American goods, and a feeling of hostility was registered against all Americans including the missionaries. The wonder is that all the work of American missions was not completely wrecked, especially since this incident followed so closely the recent anti-foreign Boxer uprisings. In the course of time, feeling subsided to some extent and the work continued, but the missionary cause was hurt by the disturbance.

A second cause of embarrassment was the rise of controversies in the Church. The contest over the settlement of the War Claim was scarcely ended before other incidents arose to disturb the ecclesiastical peace. At this point, the Vanderbilt controversy began. At a meeting of the Board of Trust in 1905, action was taken to secure a revision of the charter which would eliminate all ex-officio memberships of the Board, and it was proposed to admit to Board membership only a part of the College of Bishops. The matter was taken to the General Conference of 1906, and a Commission of lawyers was named to determine the relation of the University to the Church. The findings of the Commission were to be reported to the Bishops, to the Board of Trust and to the Board of Education, and their decision was to become automatically operative at once in the control of the University. When the Board of Trust did not observe the findings of the Commission, on October 24, 1910, the Church appealed to the civil courts in an effort to enforce its rights in the University. The contest ran through the years of 1906 to 1914, when the Church abandoned the University by defaulting in the assertion of the right awarded to it under the decision of the Supreme Court of Tennes-







BELLE H. BENNETT MEMORIAL,  
Scarritt College, Nashville

see. Thereupon the University ceased to be affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; but the marks of the controversy and the bitterness engendered by the discussion will abide until the participants in the struggle have been gathered to their fathers.

A resolution introduced by Dr. Wilbur F. Tillett and others, at the General Conference of 1906, caused an agitation which ran concurrently with the Vanderbilt issue. The paper proposed the raising of a Commission to act conjointly with similar Commissions of other Methodist bodies in the formulation of a re-statement of the creed of ecumenical Methodism. The special committee to which the paper was referred brought in a favorable report which, after a heated discussion and the invoking of a vote by orders, was adopted by a safe majority in both the clerical and the lay branches. Two protests and a reply upon the part of the Conference were spread upon the Journal, and a Commission was appointed to execute the order of the Conference and report at the next session of the General Conference.<sup>1</sup> After the adjournment of the Conference, the church press became the vehicle for an almost ceaseless discussion of the proposal, a discussion more remarkable for heat than for light. At the General Conference of 1908, the Methodist Episcopal Church declined to enter into the plan and the Commission so reported to the General Conference of 1910. Thus ended the furious contest of words which ran continuously for two entire years.

The first decade of the new century witnessed the most disastrous loss in the leadership of the Church that had been experienced in any like period. The list included: Dr. J. D. Barbee, December 5, 1904; Bishop Robert K. Hargrove, August 4, 1905; Bishop John C. Keener, January 19, 1906; Rev. Sam P. Jones, October

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<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the General Conference*, M. E. Church, South, 1906, pp. 90, 91, 106, 131, 141, 146-152.

15, 1906; Bishop John J Tigert, November 21, 1906; Bishop John C. Granbery, April 1, 1907; Dr. Young J. Allen, May 30, 1907; Dr. John Matthews, September 1, 1907; Bishop A. Coke Smith, December 27, 1907; Bishop Wallace W. Duncan, March 2, 1908; Bishop Charles B. Galloway, May 12, 1909; and Bishop Seth Ward, September 20, 1909. Dr. Young J. Allen, an authority on things Chinese, had represented the Church in China for approximately fifty years and always with honor and distinction. Bishop Galloway, in addition to his superb social leadership and his splendid administrative ability, was the last representative of a type of oratory peculiar to the old South. His going was widely lamented and the loss of his counsel in a period of divisive controversy was more than a bereavement—it was a tragedy.

Rev. Sam P. Jones, of Georgia, was one of the most unique and interesting ministers ever produced by the Southern Methodist Church. He was richly endowed by nature and was thoroughly furnished by grace for the type of evangelism which he introduced and for which his life was distinguished. No man was ever more genuinely reclaimed, nor was ever a life more effective and wholesome. He was essentially a crusader and as such he resisted the itinerant regimentation which the Church sought to force upon his ministry. He left the itinerant ranks, but without the forfeiture of his consecration or the surrender of the esteem of the Methodist people. Victorious in his own life, for thirty years he led a victorious crusade for righteousness. He was a humorist because he understood perfectly the emotions and the reactions of the human heart. The arrow, which he often seemed to shoot at a venture, found its mark with unerring precision and with telling effect.

On the first day of the General Conference of 1906, a message of greeting was sent to Rev. J. C. Berry-



man, Caledonia, Missouri, who was the last surviving member of the General Conference of 1844. His son, J. W. Berryman, responded on May 8, and the next morning a telegram was read announcing the death of the man whose going left the catastrophe of 1844 without a single living witness. Bishops elected in 1906 were; John J. Tigert, Seth Ward and James Atkins. The first two died within the quadrennium which followed. The proposal for setting up a United Methodist Church of Japan not having been consummated, the Commission was continued.

Interest in two new forms of Methodist work developed at this time. The first was an organized enlistment of the laymen in behalf of missions. A Laymen's Missionary Conference was held in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in April, 1908. The meeting was sponsored by the Board of Missions and the speakers included Honorable James Bryce, the British Ambassador to the United States, Bishop A. W. Wilson, Bishop E. R. Hendrix and others. This meeting marked the beginning of what has since become known as the Laymen's Missionary Movement, a movement which was enthusiastically hailed as promising the solution of every problem and the fulfillment of every ideal of the Church. Those enthusiastic expectations were not fully realized, but there can be no doubt that the fuller enlistment of the forces of Methodism has amply justified the organization. The movement, incorporated into the machinery of the Church at the General Conference of 1910,<sup>2</sup> has done much to broaden the view of the laymen and to deepen their interest in the missionary activities of the Church. There is, however, still much to be done for making fully effective the power represented in the lay forces of Methodism.

A second new interest was the move to make con-

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1910, pp. 67, 105, 262, 302, 338.

nectional a sporadic hospital development. No consistent and concerted effort had been made to bring the means of healing within the reach of the people. At the time, the Church owned and operated Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri, and Wesley Memorial Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia. The General Conference charged the Board of Missions with responsibility for creating a literature in the interest of hospitals and for promoting the establishment and the maintenance of hospitals.<sup>3</sup> This preliminary action was expanded into a separate Board, with its own Secretary, in 1914, but in 1934, it was again made a department of the Board of Missions, and a particular charge of the Home Department. At present, the Church owns and operates twelve hospitals, besides those located on mission fields. The financial burden of this undertaking has been somewhat oppressive, and it is likely that some unwise ventures were made. Such have had an unfavorable effect upon the movement, but the Church cannot afford to retreat from a clamant need of its people.

The rapid progress of the South was registered in the expansion of the work of the Methodist Church. Charges were divided and new charges were created with a suddenness which outran the enlistment of prepared ministers. The result was the employment of men for the emergency who would not be able to maintain themselves, should conditions be reversed. So when retrenchment and a combining of charges were made necessary by the financial stringency which developed, there came about a crowded situation which was more embarrassing to the administration than had been the problem created by growth.

The General Conference which met at Asheville, North Carolina, May 4, 1910, was largely occupied with the controversies to which we have referred; but

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 306, 307.

it enacted some very important measures. It made the most extensive revision of the ritual which had been undertaken in the history of the Church.<sup>4</sup> A further step was taken in the control of evangelistic activities, by authorizing the employment and the regulation of evangelists, as to their time and compensation.<sup>5</sup> Another effort was made to change the name of the Church. The name, "The Methodist Church," was voted, but it was vetoed by the Bishops, who gave as their reason for the veto the fact that "it would involve the titles to property." The General Conference then voted to submit the name, "The Methodist Episcopal Church in America," but this name failed to receive the constitutional majority required for its adoption.

Seven Bishops were elected, the largest number ever elected by any General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Those elected were: Collins Denny, John C. Kilgo, William B. Murrah, Walter R. Lambuth, Edwin D. Mouzon, Richard G. Waterhouse, and James H. McCoy. In response to action taken by the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, the Conference requested the Bishops to assign one of their number to go with a representative of that Church to make an investigation with a view to establishing the long-delayed mission in Africa. Dr. John Wesley Gilbert volunteered for the service, and Bishop Lambuth was chosen to represent the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The investigation was made and in pursuance of the recommendation, the mission in the Belgian Congo was opened in 1912.<sup>6</sup>

By a special vote of the Conference, Miss Belle H. Bennett was invited to address the body on the subject of laity rights for women, but the day for that step in Southern Methodism had not yet arrived. The Commission of 1906, to arrange for the consolidation

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 279-285.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 298-302.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 305, 306.

of the German work, reported that no action had been taken by the Methodist Episcopal Church, or by the Evangelical Association, and they recommended that the matter of comity and federation be taken up with the General Councils and Boards of Missions of the United States, and that all arrangements for consolidation be referred back to the Board of Missions for final approval.<sup>7</sup>

An incident occurring in 1912 was of church-wide interest, and was of particular importance to Oriental missions. It was the arrest and imprisonment of Mr. T. H. Yun, of Korea, on a charge of conspiracy to assassinate the Resident Governor-General. The charge and arrest, made by the Japanese Government, was apparently an instance of the espionage and the persecution peculiar to the Orient and to autocratic governments. Years earlier, Mr. Yun, a member of the Korean nobility, was forced to flee his native land and he took refuge in China, where he studied at the Anglo-Chinese College in Shanghai. He afterward came to America and studied at Emory College and at Vanderbilt University. As a student he was brilliant, as a man his honor and integrity were above suspicion, and as a Christian, he was exemplary and he exhibited a truly sacrificial spirit. After he left America, he taught for a time in the Anglo-Chinese College, and during that time he married a Christian Chinese girl whose mother had been reared and trained by Mrs. J. W. Lambuth in her own home. A change in Korean political affairs caused Mr. Yun to be called back to his own country and he was made a member of the national cabinet. It was while he was an official of the government that he invited the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, of which he was a member, to enter Korea. His arrest and imprisonment by the Japanese

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 304, 305.



authorities created much feeling throughout the Church, South, and particularly in the Far East. He was tried and convicted, and after a term in prison, and the serious impairment of his health, he was pardoned. Although his Christianity, his political prominence, and his capacity for leadership have been factors which brought him under strict censorship and have made exceedingly difficult his position, he has not been shaken in either his personal faith or his loyalty to the Methodist Church. His children have been educated in America and in the South and have returned to their native land to make proof of their own Christian loyalties.

This was a very prosperous time for the Methodists, North and South. In 1913, the membership record of the Methodist Episcopal Church showed a gain of one hundred and twelve thousand, which figure did not include probationers. The increase of members in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the same year was forty-five thousand. This was nearly a proportionate gain as compared with the membership of the churches. In both instances the large number of accessions was indicative of the activity of the churches in the cultivation of the field, and it also indicated the favoring circumstances of the time.

The General Conference which met in Oklahoma City, May 6, 1914, was taken up, as we have already indicated, with the Vanderbilt issue; and it was in all its doings a reaction to the decision of the Court in the Vanderbilt matter. Early in the session, a resolution was introduced and passed, providing for the appointment of a Committee to investigate the charters of the General Boards and other connectional agencies, and to inquire into the expediency of chartering the Church. The special Committee on charters reported a recommendation that a Commission be named to

examine all charters, to take such legal steps as might be necessary to secure new charters or to perfect those already existing, to re-locate Boards and Connectional agencies in other states, if advisable, and to incorporate the Church if such should seem a proper course.<sup>8</sup> The feeling of insecurity was such that a Resolution, bearing the signatures of one hundred and three members of the Conference, was passed asking that the Commission consider the re-location of the central Publishing House in another city within the jurisdiction of the Church.<sup>9</sup>

The report of the Commission was made to the General Conference of 1918, and its rather startling revelations tended to confirm the fears of the previous Conference. The Sunday School and Epworth League Boards had never been incorporated, and the only charter which received the unqualified approval of the Commission was that of the Board of Church Extension. The charters of the Board of Missions, the Board of Education, the Board of Trustees, and of the Publishing House were all defective, and before the defects could be remedied, it was found to be necessary to secure two amendments to the corporation laws of Tennessee. The amendments were secured in 1915 and in 1917, and the charters, as perfected, were reported to the General Conference of 1918.<sup>10</sup>

The Conference which met in Atlanta, Georgia, May 2, 1918, was, in some particulars, not more fortunate than had been its predecessor. The breach of the years of controversy was not fully healed. The Episcopal Address began with a somewhat defensive note, and the utterances were doubtless accentuated by reason of the fact that they were found upon the lips of Bishop Hoss who had been the leader in the Vanderbilt

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 1914, pp., 114, 115, 122, 226, 227.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp., 275-277.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 1918, pp., 464-488.

fight. The Bishops were particularly unfortunate in the strictures directed at the Board of Missions, whose course in seeking a general missionary comity in Mexico, was characterized as an "illegal and unconstitutional action." That unfortunate utterance brought forth a reply from the Committee on Missions in a report which took issue with it in language which was restrained but regrettable. The challenge of the veracity of the statements was so direct and pointed that a protest was entered upon the Journal, but the damage had been done.<sup>11</sup>

The four year tenure of the pastorate which had prevailed since 1866, was conditionally extended by permitting the Bishop to assign a pastor for a longer time where such was requested by the Quarterly Conference and approved by a majority of the cabinet. The plan of bringing the Quarterly Conference into the arranging of appointments was not altogether satisfactory, and later the law was changed so that a pastor might be returned upon a majority vote of the presiding elders, without reference to the Quarterly Conference. Two acts of the Conference were arrested by episcopal veto. The action seeking to confer laity rights upon women was arrested, on the ground that it involved a constitutional question and could only be effected by a constitutional process. Thereupon, the Conference repassed the measure by a vote of 265 to 57, and it was afterward duly approved by the Annual Conferences. The other action which was arrested was the change proposed in the Apostles' Creed. A Resolution was passed to change "Holy Catholic Church" to "Christ's Holy Church," and the Bishops objected to this because it was an effort to change a standard of doctrine.

The Joint Commission appointed to determine the

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp., 231-235, 270, 271.

question of priority in the establishment of Methodism in America, reported a unanimous verdict to the effect that Robert Strawbridge began his ministry on Sam's Creek, Maryland, in 1761, and that Philip Embury began work in New York in 1766.<sup>12</sup> The Commission included in the report a full statement of the reasons for the decision, and the sources indicated constitute a rather convincing array of data, no matter what interest one might feel in a particular claim. In lieu of the Board of Trustees, the Conference created the Board of Finance to promote and direct the cause and support of superannuates, and it directed that the holdings of the Board of Trustees be transferred to the new Board. The Board of Finance was domiciled in St. Louis, and was incorporated under the laws of the State of Missouri.<sup>13</sup>

A matter of universal interest to the whole of American Methodism was approaching a climax at this time. It was the subject of the reunion of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The agitation of this question began in 1911, when the Joint Commission on Methodist Federation proposed a tentative plan for the unification of the three churches. The plan was a step not contemplated in the creation of the Commission on Federation, hence it merely suggested the possibility of unification through the making of three or four regional jurisdictions, one of which should include the Negro constituencies of Methodism. This suggestion went to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Protestant Church in 1912, and both churches expressed their approval of the move to find a basis of union. The Methodist Episcopal Church clothed its Commission with authority to promote organic union as well

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp., 219-223.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp., 224-229.



as Methodist Federation. In 1914, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, appointed a Commission to act in conjunction with the Commissions of other Methodist Churches to perfect the tentative plan and to promote the consummation of unification in accordance with the basic principles enunciated.

It was six years before the Joint Commission was able to agree upon a plan for submission to the churches. They found that it was much easier to suggest a possible basis of union than it was to agree upon a plan which would, at the same time, deal justly and righteously with the questions at issue. Among other features, the plan, which was submitted in 1920, proposed six white Jurisdictions and one Negro Jurisdiction, and the layout for the reunited Church would have been more a dismemberment of existing bodies than a reunion of Methodism. The Methodist Episcopal Church simply expressed the feeling that the proposal was unsatisfactory and asked for a continuance of the negotiations for perfecting a plan of Methodist unification. In 1922, when the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, met, the plans of the Joint Commission had reached a stage which led the Conference, for a second time, to provide for a special called session of the General Conference, when a plan of union should have been approved by two-thirds of the Joint Commission.

The next plan which was submitted proposed a united church of two Jurisdictions. It largely preserved the organic identity of both churches while it cured none of the problems of a divided Methodism, such as overlapping of effort and the waste of men and money in competitive efforts. Again the plan went first to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, where it was approved and was received with what ap-

peared to be a general satisfaction. It was less acceptable, however, to the South. At a special session of the General Conference, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, held at Chattanooga, Tennessee, on July 2, 1924, the plan was approved and was sent to the Annual Conferences for ratification. The vote in the General Conference was 297 for and 75 against approval. In the campaign which followed, much feeling and party division developed in the South, and the vote for ratification, as reported to the General Conference of 1926, was 4,528 for and 4,108 against ratification—a majority of all the votes cast, but not the three-fourths required by the constitution of the Southern Church. The failure of the effort was disappointing to many who devoutly wished for the ending of a division which had existed since 1844, but the very fact that the proposal received a majority of the votes in the Annual Conferences was itself a great victory for the cause of union. The Southern Church did not appoint another Commission on Unification in 1926, but it named instead a Committee on "Research and Investigation" and it recommended that the subject of unification be not agitated during the quadrennium. At the General Conference of 1930, the Bishops said of the failure of the plan of union, in the Episcopal Address, "We believe, however, that this failure was only temporary, and we cherish the hope that at some future time we shall be wise enough to find a way whereby a united Methodism may, with undivided energies and unwasted resources, deliver her full strength upon the common task of reforming the continent and spreading Scriptural holiness over these lands." No renewal of the negotiations for unification was made until 1934, when a Commission on Interdenominational Relations and Church Union was appointed. In December, 1935, the Joint Commission completed the draft of the plan which

rather went back to the original suggestion of 1911. The new plan proposes five white Jurisdictions, a Central Jurisdiction to be made up of the Negro Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and certain other Central Jurisdictions covering the missionary operations of the constituent churches. The proposed Jurisdictions will achieve a degree of unification which was not true of other proposals. The plan, presently to be submitted to the General Conferences of the three churches, seems likely to be accepted, the dream of a reunited Methodism will probably become a fact, and the scars of one hundred years of disunion are likely to be healed.

By far the most important, daring and far-reaching effort of this period in the history of Methodism, was the launching of what was known as the Centenary of Missions Movement. Profiting by the example of government achievements in Liberty Loan campaigns, the two great branches of Episcopal Methodism decided to launch simultaneous campaigns in the interest of the vast missionary enterprises at home and abroad, and the movement capitalized the fact that it was the centennial of John Stewart's mission to the Wyandotte Indians. A select Committee of One Hundred met in Memphis, Tennessee, March 19-21, 1918, and, under the leadership of Bishop James Atkins, launched a campaign for raising, over a period of five years, \$20,000,000 in addition to the \$2,000,000 a year regular income of the Board—a total of \$30,000,000. The General Conference approved the plan and included in the askings \$5,000,000 additional for Church Extension, Woman's Work and other special items, making the total \$35,000,000. It was ordered that the Centenary Campaign should have the right of way during the first two years of the next quadrennium.<sup>14</sup> A perfectly synchronized

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp., 77-81; 1922, pp., 119-124.

campaign was conducted, North and South, and on May 18-25, 1919, after the most highly publicised campaign ever undertaken by any church, the pledges amounted to approximately \$37,000,000 of which more than \$20,000,000 was actually collected. This was the most remarkable achievement ever recorded in the history of missions in the modern Church.

The last two years of the quadrennium were allocated to the Board of Education for the raising of a fund for the institutions and for the educational work of the denomination. The goal set for the effort was \$33,580,300, but the enthusiasm for spectacular efforts and the novelty of their daring had been largely spent in the first great undertaking, and the ability of the people to respond had been levied upon to such an extent that the results of the campaign fell far below the measure of success which had attended the Centenary effort. However, the returns were amazing. The subscriptions totaled \$17,847,652, and \$5,830,000 in cash was received before the end of the two-year period. The two campaigns yielded twenty-five million dollars in a period of four years, in addition to the usual revenues of the Church. In the Educational campaign there were seven large gifts of \$100,000 each, and other contributions brought the total of large gifts up to \$2,500,000.

One of the new enterprises which must be credited to the Centenary Movement was the establishment of missions in Central Europe. At the end of the War, conditions in the war-ruined countries led to their inclusion in Centenary plans. A commission headed by Bishop Atkins made a survey of the field, but there was a suddenness in the projection of the work which caused it to be set up on a too insecure foundation. The work in Belgium was opened in 1919, and that in Poland and Czechoslovakia in 1920. In all places, it began



as a form of war relief and rehabilitation, and as soon as the pressure of their distresses was past, there was a reaction against the work, especially in Poland. There is no established church in Poland, but the Constitution declares Romanism to be the "dominant" faith of the republic, and such it is. The age-long subservience of Central Europe, to the Roman hierarchy, makes a very inauspicious prospect for any form of Protestant missions. When relief work in Poland was no longer a pressing need the permit granted the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was revoked, and the work which had been projected was saved by the adoption of the name of "*The Southern Trading Company*."<sup>15</sup> At length, the unforeseen economic collapse in America made a continuance of entire financial support of the work impossible, and the missions in those countries were thrust out for themselves. The Board of Missions still retains an interest in them, however, and recognizes its responsibility for the work developed as a result of its post-war ministry.

An important social reform which was recorded at this time was the final step in the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment of the Constitution, under which national Prohibition became operative in January, 1920. This was a consummation for which the Methodists had fought since the days of Francis Asbury, and no more daring or wholesome social experiment was ever undertaken by any government. The law was no sooner written into the Constitution than it became the object of the most systematic and unified attack ever made upon any advance in the moral progress of the people. After oft-repeated polls, referendums, and every conceivable type of iniquitous propaganda, the morale of the country was broken, and the politicians of the country surrendered the

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15 *A History of Southern Methodism Missions*, Cannon, p. 249.

moral achievement of a century and a half of effort and sacrifice, setting back for an indeterminate period the clock of moral and social progress in America.

The General Conference which met at Hot Springs, Arkansas, May 3, 1922, was not prolific in constructive enactments. Among other things it recorded the approval of the change in the Article of Religion respecting a Christian Man's Oath, and the rejection of the proposed change in the Apostles' Creed. The vote on the granting of laity rights for women was reported as being 4,280 for and 467 against the measure. This vote did not arouse the interest which was manifested in the vote on the question of unification. Another problem which presented itself was that of consolidating the General Boards of the Church. The proposal was referred to a special Committee whose report recommended the raising of a Commission to be composed of six clerical and nine lay members, to consolidate the work into four Boards if possible. A third Commission on the constitution of the Church was raised, and a Commission on Unification with churches other than the Methodist Episcopal Church was named.

The quest for a constitution is one of the rather interesting features of our ecclesiastical history. In 1898, Bishop Charles B. Galloway was made the chairman of a Commission which was continued through two quadrenniums, and its report seems to have died of neglect at the General Conference of 1906. A second Commission fared no better. A third Commission made its report to the Conference of 1926 and the entire matter, after a warmly contested discussion of the various items, was referred to a fourth Commission which reported in 1930. The report of the Commission was adopted item by item, but it was finally rejected as a whole. With that futile attempt the business of forming a constitution was abandoned and no sub-

sequent effort of the kind has been undertaken. It is probably just as well that the fundamental law of the Church should remain unwritten. A too definite recognition of the ecclesiastical restraints under which we labor would not facilitate the progress of the dominantly humane and spiritual ideals of the Methodist Church.

The General Conference of 1926 took two rather radical steps in the measures which it put forward. The first was a measure which proposed a change of qualification for clerical representatives to the General Conference, without regard for the required constitutional process. The action was arrested by the veto of the Bishops and it was rejected by the Annual Conference.<sup>16</sup> The second act became law, and it provided for clothing a preacher in charge of a circuit or station, in the absence of an elder, with authority to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. The act provided that the authority should be temporary and should confer none of the permanent rights of an ordained ministry. That action was a radical departure from the sacerdotal ideal and the historical teaching concerning the administration of the sacraments.

This General Conference took a forward step in a measure for raising the educational standard for the ministry of the Church. A minority report was substituted for the report of the majority of the Committee on Education, which provided that henceforth the qualification for admission on trial into the traveling connection should include two years of college work or its equivalent. The legislation provided a two-year grace period before the rule should become operative.<sup>17</sup> Another measure which looked in the same direction was the creation of "The General Conference Educa-

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<sup>16</sup> *Journal of the General Conference*. M. E. Church, South, 1926, pp., 239, 240, 266-268, 287; 1930, p. 87.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp., 194, 195.

tional Commission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South." The purpose of this new Commission was to coordinate the educational work of the Church and to relate it to the whole program of the Church in a way to conserve its values throughout every department of the work.<sup>18</sup>

The Bishops elected in their order were: John M. Moore, W. F. McMurry, U. V. W. Darlington, H. M. DuBose, W. N. Ainsworth, James Cannon, Jr., in 1918; and W. B. Beauchamp, who had been one of the leaders in directing the Missionary Centenary, J. E. Dickey, S. R. Hay, Hoyt M. Dobbs, and H. A. Boaz in 1922. The losses by death included: O. P. Fitzgerald, August 5, 1911, A. W. Wilson, November 21, 1916, J. H. McCoy, March 22, 1919, E. E. Hoss, April 23, 1919, J. S. Key, April 6, 1920, W. R. Lambuth, September 26, 1921, H. C. Morrison, December 21, 1921, Miss Belle H. Bennett, July 20, 1922, John C. Kilgo, August 11, 1922, R. G. Waterhouse, December 9, 1922, James Atkins, December 5, 1923, W. B. Murrah, March 5, 1925, and George R. Stuart, May 11, 1926.

The end of the first quarter of the twentieth century brought to the church and to the world a situation of social, national and international chaos without a parallel in the experience of modern times. In their Address to the General Conference of 1918, the Bishops described it as "the most extraordinary period in the annals of the race," following "paroxysms of violence and revolution" in which the clamors of the age-old problems of the world were fused in the noise and the confusion of "crashing kingdoms and empires," whose proud and fleeing sovereigns presented a spectacle unlike anything that had occurred in the history of human governments. This striking description of the world disorder was followed, however, by state-

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18 *Ibid.*, pp., 172-177.



ments which were more optimistic in their prophecy as to the future than has been justified by the years which have followed. The "new charter of national and international life" has been less fruitful of peace than was sanguinely predicted, for we see not even yet, "the thought of the World" prepared for peace. Neither have we realized a "heart-broken world at the feet of God," nor have we seen a suffering world "melted in the fires of war and famine and pestilence" waiting "to be recast in molds which the gospel furnishes." The end of the first quarter of the twentieth century witnessed, not only a sectional and a national change, but an actual recasting of the nations and the creation of a new international horizon. It brought about a social and industrial revolution in which the business structure of the world went to pieces. In some instances, the basic economic standards of civilization were replaced with glamorous and Utopian theories of the divine right of humanity which, more than once in the history of social progress, has served admirably the purpose of the demagogue. Above all, the hour had struck when the inexorable laws of God were to be executed against the follies of the human race, and the world was to experience a demonstration of the effects of the social blight and the economic curse which always follows in the wake of war.



## CHAPTER XV

### YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND TOMORROW

THE events of the past decade in the history of the Church are so intertwined with issues and emotions which are such living realities at the present, that it is extremely difficult to separate them from the personalities with which they are associated. There has been no winnowing process of the years to give perspective to the things that may abide, nor to dim the outline of the things which belong to the present moment. The historian is confronted, therefore, with the danger of permitting some things to bulk larger in his estimate of values than they may a few decades hence, and some less noticed incidents may come to an eminence of which he little dreams. In recording what seem to be the significant events of the present period, let it be understood that there is no intention of trying to determine what may be their ultimate significance in the life of the Church.

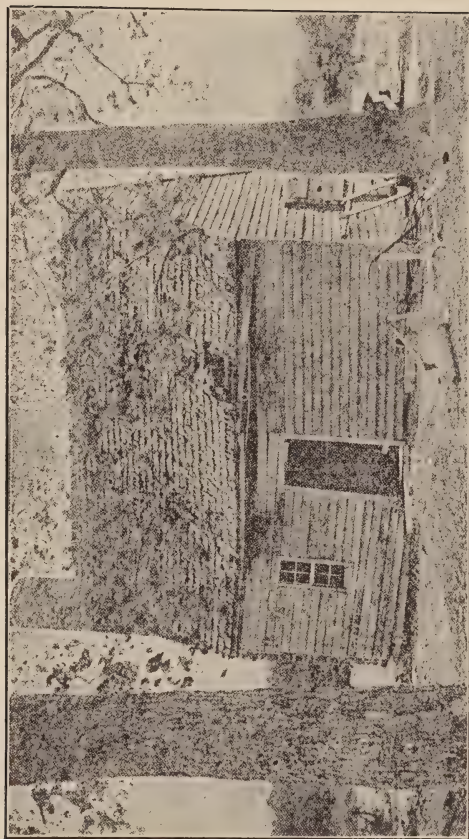
Of this latest period in the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, perhaps the one thing which may be said with confidence is that it has fed upon the bitter fruit of controversy to such an extent as to militate against the development and the maintenance of the evangelistic spirit which, from the beginning, has determined the place and the importance of Methodism. Such has been responsible for the development of a party spirit which has had an unwholesome influence

upon the progress of the Church. It has devitalized, to an unfortunate extent, the evangelism which is the explanation of the whole Wesleyan movement. For the revival enthusiasm and fervor of our fathers, we have an ecclesiasticism too satisfied with its own, and too much concerned with questions of denominational life to cultivate a passion for the salvation of the world. The joyousness and the spontaneousness of the Wesleyan revival have been supplanted to a great extent by official and campaign evangelism. We do not plead for the form, nor for the type of propagation which was common in early Methodist history, but we do plead for the retention of revival power, lest the mighty movement inaugurated by Mr. Wesley degenerate into a literature of glorified shibboleths. A decadent evangelism will mean for Methodism an attitude of insularity and self-sufficiency which will ultimately fix its horizon at its own threshold. It may continue as a great ecclesiastical machine with its pretentious program and its benevolent movements, but it will lack the effectiveness of a personalized message. It may even conduct censuses and record statistics until its interest shall lie more in the lowing of cattle and the bleating of sheep than in shouts of spiritual victory.

Aside from the moral collapse which is always the aftermath of war, every activity of recent years has been made extremely difficult by a state of economic and social disorganization unprecedented in American history. The conquests of the Church have been largely erased by a decade of world-wide depression. The properties of thousands of members of the church, who were considered wealthy, have been completely swept away and in many instances the holders have been reduced to homelessness and penury. The poor have been reduced to absolute want, while unemployment and mendicancy have been made respectable by the very







#### HOME OF GEORGE ARNOLD

In this humble country home, in Spottsylvania County, Virginia, Francis  
Asbury died, March 31, 1816.

fact that hundreds and thousands of people have been forced to accept such a status. Naturally this condition has been reflected in the life of the Church. Decreased revenues made even moderate debt obligations oppressive, and the destroyed earning power of the people created a hysteria of retrenchment which threatened to wreck the entire benevolent program of the Church. Hundreds of ministers in churches with a congregational form of government found themselves without pulpits, and only the federal element of the itinerant system of Methodism saved its ministry from disaster and prevented the abandonment of churches.

The conditions which existed were distressing enough in themselves, but there arose out of this disturbed situation problems which tended to paralyze spiritual effort and to strangle the leadership of Methodism. In the summer of 1928, there occurred the most heated political campaign which the South had experienced since the Civil War. The issues injected thrust upon the Church the necessity for declaring itself, in terms of political action and attitude, concerning the moral and social questions involved. It must either do that or surrender its own integrity and abandon an issue for which it had fought for more than a hundred years. The immediate contest ended with a defeat for the forces arrayed against the Church, but the difficulties of the leadership which stood in the breach were just beginning. A partisan press dared to enter the courts of the Church, at the General Conference of 1930, and make attack upon some who had been conspicuous in the political contest of two years previous. Attacks upon the Bishops, which appeared from day to day, led to the appointment of a special committee to deal with violations of the courtesy extended to the press.<sup>1</sup> More than once the Bishops themselves found

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of General Conference*, M. E. Church, South, 1930, p. 79.

it necessary to address the General Conference under a question of "high privilege" in order to repel the unwarranted assumptions and misstatements which were made. Specific charges were made against the moral character of Bishop James Cannon, Jr., but the General Conference declined, under the circumstances, to place him on trial. After the conclusion of the General Conference, formal charges were made against Bishop Cannon, and on February 3, 1931, a panel of twelve ministers from widely separated places, met in Washington, D. C., and sat almost continuously for five days and nights hearing the evidence, and at the end of the time, reported no trial necessary.<sup>2</sup> Later Bishop Cannon was indicted in the Federal Court of the District of Columbia on a charge of violating the "Corrupt Practices Act," in his failure to make an itemized accounting of moneys used in the campaign of 1928. The case came to trial in April, 1934, and it ended in the acquittal of the Bishop. The effect of the long contest was more than personal, for, through a period of four years, the Church not only marked time in its growth, it actually came to the end of the controversy with eight thousand fewer members than it had four years before.

The General Conference of 1930 was largely a reaction to the contest of 1928. Despite the sharp division of feeling on account of the controversy, however, its deliberations revealed the courage as well as the problem of the church. A report of the Committee on Temperance and Social Service shows the dilatory and the half-hearted attitude of Congress toward the enactment of measures necessary to make it possible for the President to enforce the federal laws.<sup>3</sup> The Bishops reported that the Annual Conferences had failed to

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1934, pp., 23, 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1930, p. 93.



ratify the change which sought to require clerical delegates to the General Conference to be members of the Annual Conference which elected them, and lay delegates to be members of some local church within the Annual Conference, at the time of the holding of the General Conference. The Conference passed a measure permitting a minister, who had been a member of any Annual Conference for ten consecutive years, to take a year off for study, travel, rest, or any justifiable cause without losing the relationship of an effective minister. A calendar limitation upon the tenure of Bishops fixed their retirement, for age, automatically at approximately seventy to seventy-four years.<sup>4</sup>

At this time action was taken for the creation of a Judicial Council. The question had been agitated almost from the beginning of the Church. The measure which was sent down to the Annual Conferences for approval was designed to give appellate jurisdiction in cases arising in Annual Conference administration and to include the veto and interpretative functions which the Bishops had exercised since 1874. The resolution creating the Judicial Council was duly ratified by the Annual Conferences and the Council was set up at the General Conference of 1934. This transfer of responsibility will at least relieve the Bishops of making decisions which might be misunderstood and misinterpreted.

By far the most radical and the most far-reaching action of the Conference was the adoption of the Report of the Educational Commission by which the entire educational set-up of the Church was recast. The enactments of previous General Conferences had been but a kind of temporizing patchwork of educational expedients, and the new legislation gave a unity to the organization and the application of the educational pro-

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp., 162. 163.

gram of the Church. It wrought it into a form which brought it into touch with the life of the whole church. The Board of Education, the Sunday School Board, and the Epworth League Board were merged into one, the Board of Christian Education. This Board was given undivided responsibility for developing and administering the entire program for that field. The sudden and complete change of organization has caused it to be a little slow in being carried into effect, but it is altogether probable that when the possible faults of this well-digested plan have been corrected its work will mark a distinct advance in the educational work of Methodism.

Two propositions brought forward at this Conference were of more than passing interest, even though they failed of their purpose. One was a paper from the Protestant Episcopal Church which proposed a sweeping move for the organic union of that Church with the Presbyterian and the Methodist Churches. The Proposal was referred to the Commission on Interdenominational Relations for consideration and there, so far as our records show, was apparently the end of a fraternal gesture. The other move was the Report of the Committee on Itinerancy which recommended the granting of clergy rights to women. The report was adopted by a vote of 172 to 155, but the Bishops interpreted it to be a constitutional question and it failed of the two-thirds vote required to submit it to the Annual Conferences. Four years later the General Conference declined to approve clergy rights for women by a vote of 197 to 130.

On the mission fields, the Church encountered a very pronounced nationalistic feeling which made progress very difficult. In order to meet this demand, as well as serve the interests of the kingdom of God, the Conference adopted a measure for the setting up of

autonomous churches in Mexico, Brazil and Korea, subject to the will of the mission Conference in those lands. Commissions were named with authority to effect these changes, and in 1934, a report was made to the effect that in all three instances the proposals had been carried to completion.

In October, 1931, the sixth session of the Ecumenical Conference of Methodism convened in Atlanta, Georgia. The difficulties raised by the financial stringency, then prevailing throughout the world, made attendance from abroad smaller than it might have been under normal conditions, but there was a fair representation of all branches of the Methodist family, and the discussions dealt with the problems and the interests of Methodism throughout the world. The pronouncements of this Conference have no binding effect upon any group—they simply furnish a Methodist survey of the common problem and the common task.

The General Conference of 1934 yielded in some measure to the trend of the times, but it also made some rather radical changes in Methodist law. The merging of certain Boards was in the nature of following out a policy inaugurated at earlier Conferences. The Hospital Board was discontinued and its work was made a responsibility of the Home Department of the Board of Missions. The Board of Temperance and Social Service was absorbed and its functions were divided between the Board of Christian Education and the Board of Lay Activities.

The most significant innovation passed was an almost revolutionary change in the financial policy of the Church. The new plan introduced the voluntary principle of permitting Annual and Quarterly Conferences to make revision in the askings for General and Conference Work. The Annual Conference may accept, raise or reduce the sum levied for General Work, and

the Quarterly Conference may exercise the same options with reference to the apportionments made by the District Stewards for both General and Conference Work. The one year of trial which the plan has had is scarcely sufficient to indicate what its final effect upon the benevolent interests may be. It seems likely, however, that the placing of the entire or final responsibility upon the charge may help to enlarge the benevolent spirit of some who have manifested a resistance without thinking through the benevolent program of the Church.

A final measure, to which the Conference of 1934 gave its approval, provided for a limitation in the office of presiding elder to a continuous term not to exceed four years, with a four year service in some other relation before he can be eligible for service as presiding elder again. The Judicial Council in its initial decision and by a divided vote decided that it must be sent to the Annual Conferences as a constitutional measure. Accordingly the measure was repassed with the necessary two-thirds vote and it was approved by the Annual Conferences.

An event of interest to all branches of American Methodism was the sesqui-centennial celebration of the founding of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The celebration was held in Baltimore, October 10-15, 1934, and was participated in by all the bodies derived from the organization which was effected in Lovely Lane Chapel, Baltimore, at the Christmas Conference in 1784. It was a time of Methodist fellowship made romantic by the atmosphere and setting of ecclesiastical birth.

A last achievement of the decade was the completion of the labors of the Joint Commission on Hymnal and the issuance of a new edition of the Methodist Hymnal for the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist



Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church. The Hymnal was issued simultaneously by the three denominations in the fall of 1935. Many of the old favorites have been deleted and in some cases new tunes have supplanted those which had come to be most familiar. The psalter has given place to a lesson arrangement for the church year. The variety of tunes and compositions excel that of any other hymn-book which the Church has issued, and it will, no doubt, serve admirably the purpose of worship for the vast army of Methodists who use it.

Four Bishops died during this decade. They were, E. R. Hendrix, November 11, 1927; J. E. Dickey, April 17, 1928; W. B. Beauchamp, June 28, 1931; and W. F. McMurry, January 17, 1934. This brings to a conclusion the record of things which have transpired in the closing period of this history. For the days immediately ahead, the event which commands the attention of the Church, and particularly the Church in the Southwest, is the celebration of the battle of San Jacinto by which Texas won her independence from Mexico, and the door of a great territorial empire was flung open for the message and ministry of the Methodist Church. On November 4 to 11, 1936, all the Annual Conferences of Texas will hold their sessions simultaneously in the city of Houston. That great Methodist gathering will mark the culmination of a celebration which will portray the heroic pageantry of the Alamo, San Jacinto, and the missionary crusade inaugurated by Martin Ruter, Littleton Fowler and others whose labors formed the foundation of Methodist beginnings in the Lone Star Republic.

In these pages, effort has been put forth to interpret every important event and epoch of Methodist history, with particular reference to the South. Incidents have been recorded with the utmost frankness and candor,

but without unduly accentuating details which are unnecessary to the understanding of history and might minister to morbid curiosity more than to a balanced judgment concerning the course of events. Records have not been suppressed in order to escape an unfavorable impression, nor have facts been softened out of deference to opposing opinion. The author holds the conviction that history and diplomacy, though inter-related, have different and often opposite ends. The main contribution of the historian to the settlement of issues or the promotion of reforms must be in making clear and understandable facts which are to be constructively dealt with in every approach to a harmonizing of thought and action.

The author of these pages does not dare to lay claim to an absolutely unbiased mind. To begin with, he has a profound interest in the South and he believes sincerely in the integrity of the Southern people. His father was a Confederate soldier whose parole, bearing the signature of General E. R. S. Canby, and whose "Cross of Honor" are among the most sacred treasures of his possession. One uncle followed the princely and the chivalrous Lee and sleeps upon a battlefield of Virginia. Another rests among the soldier dead in Atlanta, Georgia. Still another found an honored grave in the soldiers' "acre" at Jackson, Mississippi. He cannot say, therefore, that he has conquered every emotion of his heart. But, notwithstanding this inheritance from the past, he has made every effort to be fair and just, and he has cited the sources upon which every important conclusion is based. It is not necessary to deny the faults of the South, nor to make particular apology for delinquencies which it shares in common with all sections and climes. But withal, Southern people and Southern Methodists in particular are facing conscientiously, courageously and with desperate

earnestness the whole problem of this new day and experience of testing. The achievements in social progress have not been spectacular and they have not been without discouraging interludes of recession, but the ideal of social justice is still a potent factor in shaping the creed and the purpose of the Church throughout the South.

Methodism has traveled a long road since self-contained and self-complacent Bishops spurned the evangelistic enthusiasm of the great Revival and a dissolute clergy maltreated its immortal commander. The doors of their churches were closed, not upon a mild-mannered innovator, but to one whose parchment was not different from their own, except that his was wet with the *dews of heaven* while theirs was made soft with the *fleece* of earth. Those closed doors shut out not only an unwelcome intruder, but with him millions whose shouts of victory have been heard around the world and whose triumphant march has done much to hasten the coming of the Prince of Peace in the life of the world. And the story of the pious repressions of ecclesiastical authority is as the moaning of an abandoned shell beside a restless sea.

We have fought out our differences, both in the councils of American Methodism and in the ranks of armies which ran red with the wastage of human blood, the blood of brothers both in the flesh and by the purchase of redemption. Our scars may not pay high tribute to our spiritual discernment, but they at least establish the courage and conviction of those who, on any side, counted not even life itself too dear a price to pay for the defence of what they conceived to be the will of God. The real problem which confronts the Methodism of today is not a vindication of our fathers, nor a justification of the events which have disfigured our ecclesiastical history. All that is a chapter which cannot be

changed and the wounds must not be kept open. Our problem is real and our responsibility is personal. We must find the treasures of wisdom and of spiritual understanding which alone can make us equal to the opportunities and to the tragic responsibilities of the day in which we live. The location of responsibility for the wreckage of civilization will not temper the heat of the furnace in which we shall be tried, and the credo of our fathers will not suffice for those who live in a day of problems which they never knew. East and West are met, atheism and radicalism are joined in a league of friendship, and the empty-hearted pharisee has joined fortunes with the mystic in a common opposition to truth and righteousness. In spirit, there can be no North and no South if we are to hold the field for Christ and his kingdom.

Methodism, from the days of Mr. Wesley until now, has weathered many storms and has survived many controversies. In the absence of apostolic fictions and ancient precedents, it was forced to chart its own course and to set its own standards. In all its history, it has conquered through its spiritual achievements rather than by its polemical genius. It met the charge of ecclesiastical deficiency with an adaptation approved of God in results. The flexibility of its administration and polity made possible the adaptation of its program to the ever changing tides of civilization and to every variety of human need. In that respect, its history is full of hope and encouragement for the future. History, however, may become a covert and a hiding place for those who still bear the name, but lack the power of achievement. Of all the days since John Wesley launched the great Revival, these are times when men need to know God and when the evangel of love and spiritual power must flame forth in the church.

The economic and the social disparities, which cre-



ated the need and the spiritual poverty of Mr. Wesley's day, were not more challenging and difficult than is the complete disorganization of the life to which we are called to minister. Ours is not only a time of economic and social chaos, it is a time in which men are fast becoming contented with a regimentation of life which destroys personal initiative and breaks down the sense of personal and moral responsibility by which living is made worthy, constructive, and satisfying. It is easy enough to make slighting reference to the political disorganization of the alphabet, but one should not forget that it reflects a disorganization of the whole of American life and even of the ideals of the Christian Church. Political legislation, no matter what its caption or content, will never restore our economic and social equilibrium. The diffusion of Christian faith and practice must precede the day of the reestablishment of a prosperous and an ordered society. For a share in that sublime responsibility, the sons of Wesley must gird themselves, not with the statistics of a great communion, but with the thunders of Sinai, the humiliation and love of Gethsemane and the cross, the confidence of the Resurrection morning and the power of a new Pentecost. Our Methodism needs to be more directly concerned about these things than about political expedients for social security.

In the face of increasingly difficult problems and of an organized resistance to Christian faith, there is need for a reorganization of the militant forces of Methodism, not so much for a mass attack upon the enemy, as for a consistent and a unified presentation of its message for a distressed world. Such was the ideal of the founder which led to his break with the Moravians and to his organization of the *United Societies*. He established the Church in America solely because it was made necessary by political changes

which were beyond his control, but he never surrendered his devotion to the unity and the solidarity of the Wesleyan movement. About a month before his death, he wrote Ezekiel Cooper: "See that you never give place to one thought of separating from your brethren in Europe; lose no opportunity of declaring to all men that the Methodists are one people in all the world, and that it is their determination to continue so."

Since the days of Mr. Wesley there have been, as we have seen, many divisions of the Church which he created. They were dismemberments which resulted from differences of opinion on social and administrative measures, and they made deep and abiding fissures in the movement which originated in the thought and was developed under the control of one man. And they occurred in spite of the fact that the movement found its initial bond in a unity of spiritual experience. In the course of time, those who found themselves in hostile camps came to realize that their common name was the symbol of a unity which had vanished. In Britain, where Methodism was born, the divided forces of the great Revival have been reunited under a common control and together they march to the spiritual conquest of the country. In America, there has long been a deep and sincere yearning for the reintegration of the Church which had such a noble and conspicuous part in carrying the message of Christ and his redeeming power to men and women throughout the vast domain. In that cause, there has been developed a literature worthy of the spiritual ideals of the founder and of the sacrifices of his army of militant crusaders. The agitation has not been without effect, and while the progress has been somewhat slow and often retarded, it has never been completely stopped.

It was but natural that efforts for reuniting the

various Methodist groups would sometimes outrun the willingness of the people who composed them. Some who are profoundly interested in the promotion of unification seem to think that it may be accomplished by processes as mechanical and formal as were the final steps of disunion. People whose enthusiasms are perfectly sincere have to learn that division came when smoldering fires flamed forth in the articles and acts of separation, and that the entire situation must form an initial consideration in any hopeful approach to reunion. To assume that the disunion of Episcopal Methodism began with the authorization of 1844, mistakes the occasion and the instrument for the cause, and it leaves out of account the fact that back of the desperate decision of that fateful day was a long series of efforts to introduce a membership distinction which had no formal recognition in the charter of organization in 1784. It was a situation which no syllogism could resolve and the Civil War was the bloody sequel of a struggle older than the national government.

On the other hand, the adjudication of blame can never be the prelude to a restored fraternity. The kingdom of God does not move forward by such a process as that. We will be reunited by a discovery of the unity of our aims and ends, not by a parade of the gruesome skeletons of slain hopes and fellowships. Tyerman, the biographer of Mr. Wesley, uttered a sound philosophy and gave a profound interpretation of the Christian approach to union when he wrote: "Differences are kept up and perpetuated, not by greatness and goodness, but by despicable ignorance and selfish meanness."<sup>5</sup> His discriminating statement was clothed in beauty and made directly applicable to our problem by Dr. Charles H. Fowler who said: "Leaving *organic union* as a question of the future, let us make the union

<sup>5</sup> *Life and Times of John Wesley*, Tyerman, Vol. I, p., 511.

of our hearts, the question of today ; and make one holy covenant that from this hour, one in sympathy and one in purpose, we will toil on, shoulder to shoulder, waiting patiently for that near tomorrow, when there shall be one Methodism for mankind.”<sup>6</sup> Those words were spoken more than sixty years ago, inbreathed into them is the recognition of the fact that Methodism is a spirit rather than a slavish fidelity to rule, and that no arrangement which gives hospitality to prejudice or breathes an atmosphere tainted with suspicion can possibly suffice for the reuniting of the long divided sons of Wesley. During these sixty years of fraternal exchanges, two decades of which have included active efforts for federation and unification, we have been traveling slowly but surely toward that union of heart and mind which is the necessary forerunner of the organic oneness for which good men devoutly yearn.

At the present moment, there is an air of expectancy and hope abroad in the ranks of Methodism throughout the nation, but no one should allow himself to think of unification as a scheme of centralized control. Methodism must feel the throb of the spiritual power by which it was begotten, it must recognize the unity of its life and experience, and it must re-enthroned the evangelistic motive and fervor of the early days. Nothing less can make safe and wholesome such a stupendous venture in ecclesiastical control. Demands for insularity, intimations of subjugation and all suggestions of distrust are thoughts which are wholly inconsistent with every implication of the new hearthstone which the Methodisms of America propose to erect. Only a complete fluidity of interest and appreciation can be the basis of a unification which can preserve the spirit and synchronize the movements of the Methodist host.

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<sup>6</sup> Charles H. Fowler, Fraternal Address to M. E. Church, South, 1874.



Of the plan of union now before the churches, two final things may be said. First, The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is fully committed to the general outline of the map proposed. It embodies to a remarkable degree the suggestion made by the Commission on Federation in 1911, a proposal to which the Church has committed itself on more than one occasion.<sup>7</sup> The other observation is that the provision which gives to the South an equal representation in the organizing Conference, although not equitably entitled to so large a delegation, is an incontrovertible evidence of the good will and the sincere purpose of the North to give the South a square deal. There will necessarily be many problems to solve, but they will vanish as the mists of the morning when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings, upon a reunited Methodism. With the adoption of the plan now pending, the Methodists of America will be on the way to ending a century of disunion and strife and to the restoration of a fellowship which, please God, may abide forever.

The movement begun by Mr. Wesley two hundred years ago has gone steadily forward, and it has encircled the whole earth with one of the most numerous and best articulated Protestant churches in the world. It began as an unofficial form of evangelism within the Church of England where it was unwelcome and opposed. In its progress and service, it has left far behind the Church which sought to repress it. But the marvelous record of growth and achievement made by those evangelists who were led by Mr. Wesley cannot be placed to the credit of the Methodism of this generation, and the great Church which they built into the affections of men is both an asset and a liability. The message is plain: The seats of the mighty cannot

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<sup>7</sup> *Journal of the General Conference, M. E. Church, South*, 1914, p. 261; 1922, p., 363

guarantee the perpetuity of any church, and Methodism cannot hope to escape displacement, if it shall fail to minister to the needs of the people. These are not words which are intended to give encouragement to captious critics of the Church, but their purpose is to incite those who follow the devout and the consecrated Wesley to a new devotion to their great task.

In America, the ecclesiastical foundation was even less promising than had been the case in England. The movement was planted and promoted largely by an uneducated lay ministry, and up to the coming of Dr. Coke, there was not a single ordained Methodist preacher from New York to Georgia, except those who had submitted to the irregular ordination in Virginia in 1779. Aside from Mr. Wesley's unintentional irritation of the Americans by his *Calm Address*, his endowment of the organized Church was not an unmixed blessing. He gave to it a militant spirit of evangelism and an uneducated, but deeply consecrated lay ministry admirably fitted for the work of a virgin field. But he gave to it also a controverted episcopacy and a form of service utterly impossible for a new country. Whether he intended it or not, one of his greatest contributions was the liberation of American Methodism from alien control. From that inauspicious beginning, the Church built itself into the life of the republic to such a degree that no one leaves Methodism out of consideration in listing the prime factors for shaping the moral and spiritual life of the people.

Let us, however, remind ourselves again that neither the conquests of the past, nor the bigness of an organization can be a worthy or a sufficient credential for the Church of this new day. The old civilization to which Mr. Wesley and the American pioneers ministered is gone. The devotion of the people who thronged the altars in the early days is not so distinct a char-

acteristic of Methodist people as it once was. Many waver as they are called to face the trials and the temptations of the present and a distressed world waits for the challenging call of the spirit-filled evangel of the old days. Nothing less than that will re-establish enthusiastic devotion to Christ and his Church, and only that can arrest the march of the hosts who are turning to social philosophies which are but wretched perversions of truth. The fires which flamed forth from Aldersgate Street must be kindled anew upon Methodist hearthstones throughout the land and the hosts enlisted under the Wesleyan standard must take a worthy part in recovering the lost radiance of the gospel of human redemption for a world ruined by war.

The Circuit Rider's glorious trail across the pages of human history will not fade out, nor will the rallying call of the evangelism, with which he startled the wilderness, become an echo whose reverberations will mock the hopes of men. The Circuit Rider's horse has been loosed on the range and his antiquated saddlebags have found an honored place among the relics of the past. His successor has caught the step of the new civilization, but while the Circuit-Rider heart abides the shining trail will continue down the years. With the progress of culture and civilization, there has been a corresponding change in the style of Methodist preaching, but its emphasis and its spirit are still the same. It is often alleged that the Church is not producing great preachers any more, an almost meaningless phrase; but it has produced whole eras of great preaching and generations of superb interpreters of truth which more than compensates for the disappearance of the towering pulpit genius of the past.

The Methodist Church has never been without its faults and often it has been smitten by a betrayer's kiss, but never has it surrendered its soul. Many have

been the prophets who have confidently proclaimed its doom, but no generation has recorded its obsequies. Its recessions of influence and power have been many, and too often they have been results of its own delinquency, but at no time has it been outranked as a moral and spiritual force in the life of the people. Its form will change with the passing of the years, but so long as it maintains its evangelistic purpose and passion it will continue to be a militant force for righteousness and truth. And when the last sunset has been recorded and the cold, clear light of the stars has faded into the glorious light of heaven's eternal morning an innumerable multitude of voices, the voices of the children of the Circuit Rider's devotion, will swell the chorus of the angels forever.



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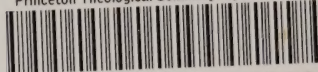






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